

Brown gives King Fahd Clinton message

RIYADH (Agencies) — U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown gave King Fahd a message on bilateral relations from President Bill Clinton after arriving here Saturday for trade talks with Saudi officials. Saudi state radio reported. It did not specify what the message said. Mr. Brown told reporters on arrival that a deal to modernise the national airline Saudia with some 60 airliners at a cost of \$6 billion would be discussed. The European Airbus consortium is also competing for the order. Earlier Mr. Brown said he was confident that U.S. aircraft firms would win the order. Mr. Brown also said he would examine opportunities for U.S. firms to modernise Saudi Arabia's telecommunications network, in talks with Saudi Communications Minister Hussein Mansour. Several Western companies, including the French firm Alcatel, are competing for the order, up to \$3 billion. Mr. Brown is also due to visit Jordan, Israel and Egypt.

Jordan Times

Amman Sunday, January 16, 1994, SHA'BAN 5, 1414
Jordanian daily newspaper published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سبائية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية: الراي

Iraq seeks help in lifting sanctions

AMMAN (AP) — Iraq is seeking Jordan's intervention with Washington to help lift the sweeping embargo imposed on Baghdad following its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, diplomats said Saturday. They said Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, Iraq's international point man during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, arrived in Jordan earlier Saturday to relay Baghdad's request. Iraqi embassy spokesman Adel Ibrahim said Mr. Aziz was scheduled to meet with several Jordanian officials during his two-day stay. He refused to discuss the nature of Mr. Aziz's talks here. But another diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Mr. Aziz "wants to ask Jordan to intercede with Washington to lift the unjustified sanctions against the people of Iraq." Jordanian officials said Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, who is due to leave for the United States within 48 hours, was scheduled to meet with Mr. Aziz on Sunday. Dr. Majali will be joining His Majesty King Hussein for talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton at the White House on Jan. 21.

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Pope's Lebanon trip to go ahead — Hariri

BEIRUT (R) — Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri made clear Saturday that Pope John Paul would visit Lebanon this year despite a dispute caused by the Vatican's recognition of Israel. Some Muslim clerics reacted to the recognition last month by saying the Pope should not make the visit expected in May. The pro-Iranian Hizbollah called the recognition "an historic sin" and there has been mounting speculation in the press that the visit might be called off. However, Mr. Hariri told members of Lebanon's journalists union that the recognition was badly timed and damaged Arab interests but Lebanon was still ready to welcome the Pope. "We do not confuse our appreciation and respect for the Pope with the political step of recognising Israel," Mr. Hariri said.

Arab envoy to visit Iraq on 'detainees'

KUWAIT (R) — Arab League officials will visit Iraq this month for talks aimed at securing the release of hundreds of Kuwaitis missing and believed held by Baghdad, a newspaper reported on Saturday. A special delegation would leave for Baghdad on Jan. 20 "in a bid to help release Kuwaiti detainees," Al Anba newspaper reported. Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid said in an interview, Kuwait says Iraq holds at least 624 people detained during its seven-month occupation of the emirate in 1990-91. These comprise 563 Kuwaitis, 13 Saudis, five Iranians, four Egyptians, four Syrians, three Indians, three Lebanese, an Omani, a Bahraini, a Filipino and 26 stateless Arabs. Iraq denies it still holds anyone detained during the Gulf crisis.

Iran confirms arrests in Tehran attacks

NICOSIA (AP) — Iranian authorities confirmed Saturday they have arrested 17 people in connection with attacks on embassies and public areas in Tehran. The state-run Islamic Republic News Agency, IRNA, said four of those arrested were later released after questioning. It quoted police Colonel Reza Mohammadi as saying some of the detainees confessed to having links with the outlawed Mujahedeen-e-Khalq. The Baghdad-based Mujahedeen repeatedly have denied any connection with the attacks. The announcement of arrests by Iranian authorities confirmed a report the day before in the English-language Tehran Times, which quoted an unidentified Interior Ministry source.

Saudi-Yemeni talks on border resume Monday

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi and Yemeni experts Monday will resume talks in Sanaa to resolve a border dispute between the two countries. Yemen's ambassador to Riyadh, Ghalib Ali Jameel, told AFP on Saturday. The dispute concerns the border provinces of Najran, Jizan and Assir, which came under Saudi control under an agreement signed in 1934. Yemen wants a return of the territories, saying the agreement expired in 1992. It has refused to renew the accord. The Saudi-Yemeni meeting, originally scheduled for Dec. 20, is the seventh since the talks on the border issue began more than a year ago. It was delayed at the Yemenis' request when their chief negotiator, Jaafar Saleh, fell ill.

U.S. congressmen visit Somalia

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Five U.S. congressmen arrived here Saturday to check that everything is ready for a smooth handover to the United Nations when American forces withdraw in March. Leading the delegation was Representative John Murtha, chairman of the House of Representatives Defence Appropriations Committee, a Democrat from Pennsylvania.

Clinton and Assad meet today amid positive signals

Sarid says Golan 'sovereignty' will have to be returned to Syria • Damascus sees summit success

GENEVA (Agencies) — U.S. President Bill Clinton and Syrian leader Hafez Al Assad, who holds the key to an overall Middle East peace, arrived here Saturday amid tight security for a summit aimed at reviving Syrian-Israeli negotiations. Mr. Assad arrived ahead of Mr. Clinton at the heavily-guarded International Hotel, where the two are to hold their first ever talks, expected to last three hours, on Sunday.

Neither leader made any statement, but official comments from Israel and Syria set an upbeat tone for the summit. Israeli Environment Minister Yossi Sarid said Israel was ready to give up sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which it seized in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, but in return for total peace with Syria. "If Syria is ready for real, total peace, with diplomatic relations, the opening of borders and very detailed security arrangements, Israel will, in exchange, have to give up sovereignty over the Golan," said Mr. Sarid, a leader of the leftist Meretz party.

It was the first time such a high-ranking Israeli official had said Israel was prepared to give up sovereignty over the

Golan.

If President Assad spells out to President Clinton at Sunday's summit what type of relations he envisions with Israel, then the Israeli government "will have to make some important and difficult decisions in the near future," Mr. Sarid said on Israel army radio.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said Israel was ready to discuss the details of withdrawal if Mr. Assad revealed his position.

"If Clinton tomorrow will hear new things from Assad, we will at this stage certainly be committed... to start negotiating the borders (between Israel and Syria)," Mr. Beilin said on Israel television.

Mr. Beilin also said that if as part of an agreement, U.S. troops and other international peacekeepers were deployed in a Golan buffer zone, "this would contribute to stability in our region."

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has said in the past that in exchange for peace he is ready to pull out from part of the Golan, but never spoke publicly of full withdrawal.

"After the summit meeting, Israel will form its position, and act according to what will



Syrian President Hafez Al Assad cups his ears to hear journalists' questions upon arrival at Geneva airport Saturday (AFP photo)

develop. We will not deal with any hypothetical situations," a Rabin aide said Saturday, when asked to comment on Mr. Sarid. He spoke on condition of anonymity.

Hawkish opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu said Saturday that Mr. Rabin's government already proposed to Syria some time ago "to carry out complete withdrawal from

all of the Golan, until the 1967 lines, a withdrawal in stages." He said Israel also proposed that U.S. forces be deployed in parts of the Golan as a buffer. Mr. Netanyahu, who

opposes any withdrawal from the Golan as a step that would endanger Israel's security, spoke on army radio. Mr. Netanyahu has said this in the past, and it has been denied by the government.

Meanwhile, Israel Radio released some results of a telephone survey among 250 families living in the Golan.

Asked whether it was possible to make peace with Syria without giving up all of the Golan, 55 per cent said no.

Fifty-five per cent also said they expected Israel and Syria to reach an agreement within five years that would involve some Israeli withdrawal.

Asked whether they would remain in their homes under Syrian sovereignty, 85.5 per cent said no. Another 52 per cent said they have discussed the possibility of leaving the Golan, and 11 per cent of them have taken some practical steps, such as looking for a new job or home, the radio said.

Although Mr. Assad and Mr. Clinton are staying in the same hotel, they are not due to meet until Sunday morning. During talks in Moscow, Mr. Clinton and Russia's President, Boris Yeltsin said they were determined to achieve

progress on issues affecting Syria and Lebanon on the basis of United Nations resolutions.

A Syrian official in Damascus, speaking as Mr. Assad was leaving for Geneva, said his country received this assurance with optimism. He suggested it showed the world had recognised "that incomplete peace could not give security to anyone."

Syrian radio, meanwhile, said the summit looked as if it would succeed and that Damascus and Washington "agreed on the broad lines of a settlement in the Middle East."

Damascus, Saturday repeated its stand that peace would not last unless the Jewish state withdrew from all the other Arab territories seized in 1967 — East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"A just and comprehensive peace, not a separate peace, not a separate compromise, not secret negotiations..." the official Al Thawra newspaper said.

Leaders of Jewish settlers on the Golan were in Geneva to urge Mr. Clinton to respect what they said was their right to live on the strategic heights.

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House endorses draft budget 56-20 after marathon debate

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament Saturday endorsed the draft budget for 1994 after introducing a number of amendments recommended by the House's Financial Committee.

Fifty-six out of 77 deputies present at the session voted in favour of the budget and 20 voted against it. House Speaker Taher Al Masri did not vote.

In addition to the 16-member Islamic Action Front bloc, leftist deputies Bassam Haddadin, Khalil Haddadin, Toujan Faisal and Mustafa Shneikat voted against the draft budget.

Deputies cut by JD 6 million the projected JD 66 million current expenditure for 1994 and deleted all references in the draft budget to the controversial sales tax. The Financial Committee recommended reference to the tax be dropped as it has not been approved by the legislature.

The House also approved most of the recommendations of the Financial Committee, which were endorsed separately from the articles of the budget.

Lawmakers added to the recommendations of the committee a proposal that would request the government to include in future draft budgets

details of allocations for governmental institutions which have financial independence. The proposal was a watered-down version of an original proposal by Deputy Abdul Karim Al Dughni to amend the draft budget law itself to include the budgets of these institutions, which are estimated at JD 500 million.

The vote on the budget, which ended around midnight, came at the end of a marathon session during which 72 deputies took the floor.

Many deputies criticised the budget for failing to adequately address the economic challenges facing the country and for not offering appropriate solutions to the problems of poverty and unemployment.

Many deputies also questioned the accuracy of the budget's figures on foreign debts, growth in the gross domestic product, and the rates of poverty and unemployment and inflation. Many lawmakers also said that Finance Minister Sami Gammooh's assertion that the budget was "deficit-free" was misleading.

In a lengthy speech that sought to address most of the remarks raised by deputies, Mr. Gammooh said that the budget was free from the financial deficit that accompanied all the budgets in the history of the Kingdom.

He pointed out, however, that the budget had an economic deficit which would appear if loans and grants are excluded from the projected revenues. Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali said the government will study the recommendations of the Financial Committee and will work in cooperation with the House to consolidate the democratic process in the Kingdom.

Dr. Majali said the government would consider the demands and implement what could be carried out in light of the available resources.

He pointed out, however, that it would "take several times the amount of the budget to meet all those demands. Dr. Majali indirectly criticised the deputies for making recommendations that would reduce revenue and increase expenditure at the same time.

He said that while deputies asked for salary increases for civil servants, reduction in foreign debt, and health insurance for all citizens, they also demanded that government reduce direct and indirect taxes, repay its debts and offer more subsidies.

Dr. Majali defended the economic plan of his government saying that it was drafted in a way that corresponded with the needs and aspirations of the whole region.

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Jordanian claims for Gulf war at least \$7b

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordanians who fled Kuwait after Iraq's 1990 invasion have submitted claims totalling over \$4 billion to a U.N. compensation fund for victims of the Gulf crisis, Jordanian officials said Saturday.

In addition to private claims, which had to be presented by the end of 1993, officials said Jordan expected to present at least another \$3 billion in state claims.

These have to be submitted by May 1. "Jordan's individual claims of personal and material losses incurred during the Gulf crisis and filed to the United Nations compensation fund are estimated at \$4 billion," a senior Jordanian official who requested anonymity told Reuters.

Jordanian individuals and families had filed over 65,000 claims, the officials said. The claimants represented nearly 90 per cent of the more than 350,000 Jordanians forced to leave Kuwait after Iraq's Aug. 2, 1990 invasion.

They included some who left after the emirate was liberated, although the United Nations does not share Jordan's view that these people are entitled to compensation.

Nearly 713 Jordanians and Palestinians submitted claims

for personal injury or death of others, and those are expected to be first to receive compensation. The United Nations hopes to make awards totalling \$3 to \$5 million in April.

More than 41,000 Jordanians, including small entrepreneurs who ran part-time businesses, filed claims for individual losses of up to \$100,000. Another 1,225 claimed losses over \$100,000. Some filed more than one claim.

Many of the 70,000 Jordanian wage earners, who lived in Kuwait before the invasion, supplemented state jobs with work in the private sector, many ending up controlling businesses.

The U.N. compensation commission, set up to compensate victims of Iraq's invasion, received 2.3 million claims for \$25 billion from people in 78 states. Most claimants are from Egypt, Jordan and Kuwait (see page 10).

The Geneva-based commission also has received \$100 billion in claims from corporations and governments for damages from Iraq's occupation of the Gulf emirate.

Corporations located in Kuwait have until April 1 and governments until May 1 to submit claims for all losses to their national economies.

So far, 307 Jordanians who were partners in large private

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PLO: Syrian-Israeli progress will benefit all

CAIRO (Agencies) — Chief Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) negotiator Nabil Shaath left for Tunis saying he was optimistic Sunday's U.S.-Syrian summit in Geneva would pave the way towards a Syrian, Jordanian and Lebanese return to Middle East peace talks.

"If America takes up the issue (of the talks) and if Israel agrees to a complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights the door will open to Syrian flexibility, and subsequently, Jordan and Lebanon will return to the talks," he said Saturday.

The summit between U.S. President Bill Clinton and his Syrian counterpart Hafez Al Assad aims to retrack Israeli-Syrian talks in time for the scheduled resumption of the Middle East peace process in Washington on Jan. 24.

The negotiations have been deadlocked for two years. Syria wants an Israeli commitment to full withdrawal from the Golan, but Israel says it will not discuss the extent of a pullout until Syria clarifies the nature of a possible peace agreement.

The talks ended on Wednesday with progress reported on

The PLO-Israeli peace accord, negotiated in secret last year, angered Damascus, which says the deal has sidetracked Syrian, Jordanian and Lebanese talks with Israel.

But last week it described the accord as the first step on the path to peace.

Dr. Shaath also said he hoped Israel would handle security issues in the next round of talks with the PLO with the flexibility it applied to civilian issues.

"I hope the Israeli delegation will not place obstacles in the way of the negotiations and that they will handle security issues in the way they handled civil issues so that there will be a chance for movement," Dr. Shaath told reporters at Cairo airport.

The Taba talks, aimed at clearing the way to an Israeli withdrawal from occupied land originally planned for Dec. 13, resumed last Monday after weeks of squabbling over security arrangements.

The talks ended on Wednesday with progress reported on

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U.N. official, 10 others wounded in Gaza Strip

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A U.N. field worker from Chicago and 10 Palestinians were wounded in the occupied Gaza Strip on Saturday, when Israeli soldiers opened fire to disperse stone throwers, Arab reporters said.

The American, identified as Terry Grace, 52, was shot in the leg and was in good condition at a Gaza City's Ahli Arab hospital, said a U.N. official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The clash in Gaza City's Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood began when troops were pelted with stones near the local mosque, Arab reporters said. Soldiers opened fire, wounding Mr. Grace and ten Palestinians, ranging in age from 13 to 25.

Mr. Grace apparently was hurt when a bullet hit the car he was sitting in, said the U.N. official. Mr. Grace is a field worker for the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which assists Palestinian refugees.

Palestinian witnesses said soldiers opened fire on his car, which had "UNRWA" written on it. A bullet went through the

right door and hit Mr. Grace, who was sitting next to his Palestinian driver.

The Gaza Strip was paralysed on Saturday by a general strike called by the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas in protest at the killing of five of its members.

Demonstrators hurled stones, burned tyres and blocked roads, sources said.

On Friday Israeli soldiers shot dead four Hamas members in the West Bank town of Hebron, after surrounding the house where they were holed up.

An Israeli army spokesman said the leader of the Hamas armed wing Ezzedin Al Qasam and wounded another Israeli on Friday before troops shot him dead.

Some 100 Hamas supporters marched through Gaza City's main thoroughfare, Omar Al Mukhtar street, chanting: "Stabbings, suicide attacks and car-bombs are our way to paradise."

Priorities could converge in Geneva to lift Mideast logjam

By Ghadeer Taber
Special to the Jordan Times

QUNEITRA — High atop the Golan Heights, Israeli soldiers look down at United Nations peacekeepers patrolling the Syrian-Israeli demarcation line and Syrian troops roaming in the ruins of Quneitra, a city destroyed by Israel when it withdrew in 1974 from a part of the Golan Heights it occupied in the 1967 war.

The return of the strategic plateau to Syrian sovereignty is certainly one of the top items on President Hafez Al Assad's agenda for talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton in Geneva today.

The much-heralded summit signals an end to a Syrian boycott of the two-year-old talks with Israel after Damascus felt left out when the Palestine Liberation Organi-

sation (PLO) and Israel signed their groundbreaking autonomy accord on Sept. 13.

President Assad is expected to lay down Syrian (and Lebanese by implication) positions and perhaps meet the Israeli call for an open statement on Damascus' definition of "total peace." Equally important, Mr. Assad will also seek American perceptions of Syria's role in a post-peace process Middle East.

The outlines of a Syrian-Israeli agreement have long been obvious. Israel will recognise Syrian sovereignty over the Golan in return for detailed Syrian pledges for full diplomatic relations. American-backed security guarantees and a phased timetable for an Israeli pull-out. But so far the political will to sign on to such an

accord has been missing.

The question is whether the summit can nudge Syria and Israel into taking risks.

Optimism was palpable from the Syrian side as Mr. Assad and a 100-man entourage headed for Geneva. But diplomats in Damascus are downplaying what Syrian officialdom and press have termed "a historical meeting with great significance for the whole region."

They say that while the summit is certainly a boost for Mr. Assad's stature, they do not expect the meeting to result in dramatic breakthroughs. In talks with the American president, Mr. Assad will rely on a number of strong cards, including the security of Israel's northern borders, the Palestinian groups that oppose the "Gaza-Jericho first" agreement and Syria's strategic

alliance with Iran and with the Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) which is waging a separatist war in Turkey, an American ally.

Mr. Clinton "expects" the summit to produce a Syrian announcement of Damascus' readiness to establish "diplomatic relations" with Israel if the Israelis withdraw from the Golan and Lebanon, without linking this with the completion of the withdrawal process, sources said.

Syria is insisting that any announcement of its readiness for full peace with Israel be conditional on the preparation of a clear timetable for a full Israeli withdrawal.

Such an announcement by Mr. Assad could give Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, under domestic pressure because of rising violence and stalled talks with the PLO, enough ammunition to

sell the idea of an eventual relinquishing of Golan to the Israeli public, inducing movement on the Israeli-Syrian track instead of keeping it hostage to the Palestinian-Israeli track.

"Rabin is not ready to publicly commit himself to a timetable. An announcement by Mr. Assad that he is ready for full peace may provide the right opportunity for Mr. Rabin to move on the Syrian track," said a European diplomat in Damascus.

Diplomats say Syria wants withdrawal within one year and normalisation within five years, at the end of the Palestinian self-interim period. The Israelis and Americans, on the other hand, insist on withdrawal and normalisation in tandem.

Mr. Clinton wants to pull

(Continued on page 5)

هكذا عندنا الأصل

Experts say Clinton should be cautious with Assad in Geneva

By Alan Elsner
Reuter

WASHINGTON — Veterans of past encounters say President Bill Clinton must be wary when he meets Syrian President Hafez Al Assad in Geneva Sunday and avoid being drawn into too much detail.

This will only be the fourth meeting between a U.S. president and Syrian president and the first to take place against a background of an ongoing Arab-Israeli peace process.

In the three previous meetings, the United States was represented by Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter and George Bush.

All three times, the man across the table was Syria's seemingly perennial leader, Mr. Assad. Twice, in the case of Mr. Nixon and Mr. Carter, he coaxed his U.S. interlocutors into saying things they may later have regretted.

"Assad is far more experienced and knowledgeable on the issues he cares about than any American he meets. It's very important for Clinton to know exactly what he wants out of the meeting," said William Quandt who advised Mr. Carter in his 1977 encounter with Mr. Assad and sat in on the meeting.

The main aim for Mr. Clinton is to reenergize the Middle East peace process, specifically by pressing Mr. Assad to inject more substance into the deadlocked Israeli-Syrian talks.

These negotiations, scheduled to resume in Washington on Jan. 24, have essentially been at an impasse for two years over the same point.

Syria wants Israel to commit itself to full withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights but Israel says it will only discuss the extent of its withdrawal when Syria spells out the kind of peace agreement it is prepared to offer in exchange.

Will it be peace in the narrow sense of non-belligerency, or will it include the establishment of diplomatic relations, economic and trade ties, tourism and cultural and sporting exchanges as Israel is demanding?

Bilaterally, Syria remains on the U.S. list of states supporting what Washington defines as global terrorism and is listed as a country which aids and abets the international drug trade.

Once lavishly armed and bankrolled by the Soviet Union, Syria has lost its former superpower mentor and is now looking to the West to help reform its state-run economy.

This gives Mr. Clinton considerable leverage with Mr. Assad. But the peace process is likely to dominate the meeting. The United States had to work hard to keep Syria in the game over the past few months.

Mr. Assad felt betrayed when the Israelis and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) unveiled a secret deal last September, negotiated without his knowledge.

But by December, when Secretary of State Warren

Christopher visited Damascus and set up the summit, he found Mr. Assad willing to return to the talks.

Mr. Assad also offered Israel some minor gestures, allowing Syrian Jews to emigrate and permitting a U.S. team to search for Israeli soldiers missing in action in Lebanon.

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Assad may approach the meeting with very different expectations. For Mr. Clinton, it is the final stop in a long and gruelling trip which has included a NATO summit, important talks with Russian President Boris Yeltsin and side trips.

For Mr. Assad on the other hand, this is his most important meeting of the year and possibly for several years. He has been planning his strategy and tactics for weeks.

By all accounts, Mr. Assad relishes his encounters with U.S. presidents and secretaries of state and is famous for subjecting them to two- or three-hour lectures on the history from the time of the Crusades to the present day.

Former Secretary of State James Baker called his meetings with Mr. Assad "bladder diplomacy" because it was considered bad form to leave the room for the toilet.

"Assad loves these meetings. He approaches them like a marathon and can be counted on to be in good shape," said Richard Haass, a Middle East adviser to former President George Bush, now with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.



STRANDED: An Afghan refugee girl Friday waits for her turn to board a United Nations truck in an attempt to enter Pakistan on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border (see page 10). Reports said Saturday the thousands who were waiting after Pakistan closed the border returned to Jalalabad, midway between Kabul and the border (AFP photo)

Germany takes Iran to task on human rights

BONN (R) — Germany, under fire for its ties with Tehran, urged Iran Friday to respect human rights, lift a death edict on British author Salman Rushdie and pardon a German sentenced to die on espionage charges.

Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel made the demands in a meeting in Bonn with Mohammad Larjani, deputy chairman of the Iranian parliament's foreign relations committee.

A ministry statement said Mr. Kinkel stressed the importance of keeping up a dialogue with Tehran, but that this required all issues to be openly and sincerely discussed.

"This is particularly true for questions concerning respect for human rights in Iran," the statement said.

Germany has pursued a dialogue with Iran at a time when most Western nations are keeping it at arm's length until it distances itself from radical guerrilla groups, improves its human rights record and withdraws the 1989 death edict for alleged blasphemy against Mr. Rushdie.

Last October, Germany drew angry protests from Washington and London for allowing a visit by Iranian intelligence chief Ali Fallahian. The American Jewish Committee last month criticised Germany's relations with Iran and said Bonn's argument that Tehran could only be coaxed

into the international fold through dialogue was a cover for purely commercial interests.

Germany has been the biggest Western exporter to Iran in recent years.

Mr. Kinkel told Mr. Larjani nobody must be persecuted because of his views or religion and asked Iran to stop discriminating against followers of the Bahai religious group.

"He expressed hope that Iran in the future will work constructively with the United Nations Human Rights Commission," the statement said.

Mr. Kinkel urged Tehran to lift the death edict imposed on Mr. Rushdie by the late Ayatollah Khomeini for the author's novel "The Satanic Verses."

He said his meeting with Mr. Rushdie in Bonn on Dec. 9 underscored the importance Germany attached to the freedom of speech as a basic human right.

Mr. Kinkel also appealed for clemency for German engineer Helmut Schimke, saying the Bonn government considered the case "an extraordinarily serious matter."

Reagan, Meese drop bid to suppress report

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Attorney General Edwin Meese joined ex-President Ronald Reagan Friday in ending their court battle to suppress the Iran-contra prosecutor's highly critical final report.

But release of independent counsel Lawrence Walsh's report next week still could be blocked if former White House aide Oliver North asks the supreme court to review a Jan. 7 federal appeals court order.

Mr. Meese said through his lawyers that he would not seek supreme court review of the order by a special three-judge panel to release the report next week.

Release of the Walsh report has been blocked for the past month by secret court filings from Mr. Reagan, Mr. Meese and Mr. North. Sources close to the seven-year investigation of the Iran-contra scandal have said Mr. North's lawyer could not be reached for comment.

The Walsh report concludes that Mr. Meese concocted a false account of one of the arms-for-hostages deals with Iran, according to other sources close to the probe, who have read portions of the Walsh document. Both sets of sources spoke on condition of anonymity.

"Once Walsh's report is made public," lawyers "will address both the report's outrageous content and the irresponsible conduct of Lawrence Walsh," said Mark Levin of the Landmark Legal Foundation, a conservative public interest law firm representing Mr. Meese.

"We look forward to the next step, which is to publicly confront Walsh's false statements head on," Mr. Levin added. "The (former) attorney general acted properly and responsibly in every aspect of this matter."

On Thursday, Reagan lawyer Theodore Olson said the former president's conduct in Iran-contra "was above reproach" and that he would not seek supreme court review — which could further delay the report's release.

Mr. Walsh's report concludes that Mr. Reagan "set the stage" for the Iran-contra scandal's illegal activities, according to the second set of sources.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Train smashes into bus in Algeria; 22 dead

ALGIERS (R) — An Algerian freight train smashed into a bus at an unguarded crossing Friday, killing 22 people and injuring 39, the state news agency APS reported. The freight train barreled into the bus near the town of Mouzaia, about 50 kilometres southwest of the capital, and sliced it in half. Carrying about 65 people from Algiers to the western Algeria SPA town of Bou Hanifia, the bus turned off the main road to cut across the tracks at an unofficial crossing; one passenger said. "The driver didn't see the train and even when the train whistled, instead of reversing he tried to go forward," the man told Algiers Television. "I was the last person trapped on the bus, which was cut in half with its engine still running." State television showed footage of the mangled remains of the bus, its seats crumpled and its metal casing ripped to pieces. "It was terrifying," said another passenger. "I was thrown nearly 10 metres and landed on people who were in taken to hospitals in neighbouring towns of Blida and Al Affroun for treatment. A doctor at one hospital said neighbouring families brought extra beds to help cope with the overflow of patients, some of whom were shown lying on mattresses on the floor."

Doctor forgets his own medicine

CAIRO (R) — A plane carrying 229 passengers from Cairo to New York turned around just 10 minutes after take-off when a doctor on board said he had forgotten his own medicine. Officials at Cairo airport said Kazem Farag needed to take injections every four hours for a kidney complaint and would not have survived the 12-hour journey. They said he had left his syringes in a bag belonging to his brother, who had been supposed to fly with him but had not been allowed on the flight. The plane returned to Cairo, dropped Dr. Farag off, and took off again without him, they said.

Abducted Assyrian priest released

IDIL, Turkey (AP) — An Assyrian priest who was abducted five days ago has been released, police sources reported. The Rev. Melki Tok of the Assyrian Church was released Thursday near the site of his abduction in this town in southeastern Turkey, said a police source on condition of anonymity. Rev. Tok was from the Mor Gabriel Monastery. Another priest from the same monastery was abducted last February, and never returned. Local authorities said they believe Kurdish separatists were responsible for the kidnappings. The extremists are opposed to socialist Kurdish separatists, from the Kurdish Labour Party, who are waging a guerrilla war in the southeast. The region is home to an estimated 5,000 Assyrian Christians. Members of the church also live in Iran, Syria and India.

Israeli denies attempted murder in Cyprus

NICOSIA (R) — An Israeli facing charges of attempted murder in Cyprus pleaded not guilty on Friday before a criminal court in the port city of Limassol. Mordechai Ben Mayer, 40, a factory worker who tried to escape by jumping from a court window last December, is the only suspect in the attempted murder of a Limassol diamond merchant on Nov. 4. Philokyprios Matheou, 46, was stabbed by a hooded man in the port city but survived. Hours after the stabbing police arrested Mr. Mayer and his girlfriend Paula Fargon, 33, a secretary, as they prepared to board a plane to Tel Aviv at Larnaca airport. Both were remanded but Ms. Fargon was released on Nov. 16 after police found nothing incriminating against her. Mr. Mayer will stand trial on Feb. 22.

Israeli shelling wounds shepherd in Lebanon

TYRE, Lebanon (R) — Israeli forces shelled the area round a South Lebanon village just north of their occupation zone Friday, wounding a shepherd, security sources said. A dozen artillery shells fired from inside the zone slammed around the village of Shaqra wounding the herder and killing a large number of sheep, they added. Guerrillas of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God) are active in Shaqra. In a separate incident in the south, a Hizbollah guerrilla was wounded in a clash between members of the group and Syrian-backed Amal movement in the village of Kharib Salm. The sources said the brief clash was sparked by a dispute over the use of a mosque in the village.

Group accuses Syria of rights abuse

PARIS (R) — A Syrian opposition group alleged on Friday ahead of President Hafez Al Assad's meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton that Damascus had jailed thousands of opponents without trial and systematically tortured detainees. The Paris office of the League for the Defence of Political Detainees in Syria said it was asking Amnesty International and other organisations to denounce human rights abuse before the meeting in Geneva on Sunday. The group alleged several thousand opponents were in prison without charges or trial and that 15 of them had been held for the past 23 years. Some convicts were not released after serving their sentences, it said. The group said in a statement that hundreds of opponents were now on trial before a military court, and some political detainees, including 38 people allegedly arrested 14 years ago, were missing. It alleged about 30 detainees had been tortured to death and some detainees had died from the effects of ill-treatment after release. The group urged human rights organisations to protest against what it called torture and unfair trials, demand the release of all political prisoners and request the lifting of the state of emergency in Syria.

U.N. envoy expects developments in Cyprus

ANKARA (R) — A senior U.N. official said on Friday he was hopeful that the two sides in divided Cyprus would soon agree on confidence-building measures. "We hope developments on confidence measures will reach a rapid conclusion," Gustave Feissel, special envoy for Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, said after meeting Turkish Cypriot Prime Minister Hakkı Atun.

PLO arrests Gazan for alleged spying

TUNIS (AP) — Palestinian security agents have arrested a Palestinian man from the Israeli-occupied territories on charges of spying for Israel, sources said Saturday.

Ahmed Abu Ouf, 24, a native of Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip, was apprehended Monday in Tunis after arriving on a flight from London, said the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

It was the first time the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) arrested a resident of the occupied territories on charges of passing secrets to Israel since the movement transferred its main operation to Tunisia in 1982.

The arrest comes several months after the arrest of an alleged spy for Israel shook the organisation with fears that

Yasser Arafat's leadership apparatus is exposed to infiltration.

Such charges are sensitive as PLO is preparing for a limited autonomy in the West Bank town of Jericho and the Gaza Strip under its recent agreement with Israel.

The sources said the PLO had summoned Mr. Abu Ouf from London, where he was visiting a brother, but refused to say how.

Despite his alleged espionage, Mr. Abu Ouf will also be investigated for possible connections to the killings of PLO leaders in the Strip after the signing of the accord with Israel, the sources said.

It is not clear what role Mr. Abu Ouf had in the organisation, although his family is believed to have ties with Mr.

Arafat and his mainstream Fatah faction.

The sources said the PLO believes Mr. Abu Ouf was an important agent for the Israelis, supplying crucial information about PLO operations in Gaza.

Last November, Tunisian police arrested Adnan Yassin, deputy to Hakan Balawi, the PLO's representative to the Tunis government, on charges of spying for Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency.

He was later handed over to the PLO, and has allegedly confessed, according to PLO sources.

The PLO believes thousands of Palestinians have collaborated with Israeli authorities in the occupied territories, Palestinian death squads have killed 789 of them.

Shamir admits ordering death of terror colleague

TEL AVIV (R) — Former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir admits in his memoirs that he ordered the killing of a colleague in a Jewish terror group fighting British authorities 50 years ago.

The victim, Eliahu Giladi, was too ready to sacrifice human lives and had to be stopped, Mr. Shamir said in an excerpt of his memoirs published in Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper.

It has been widely charged but never proven that Mr. Shamir, as leader of the notorious anti-British Lehi or Stern gang, ordered the execution of his deputy Giladi in 1943.

"I am strong in my opinion I had no alternative — although the deed took a heavy personal price from me and cost me much suffering," Mr. Shamir said in the first of a series of excerpts of his forthcoming memoirs entitled "B'Sicum Shel Davar" (in the final analysis).

Mr. Shamir, who was defeated by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1992 elections, said Mr. Giladi's proposals included inciting British soldiers to fire on Jewish demonstrators to increase public opposition to British rule in Palestine.

Mr. Giladi eventually talked about killing David Ben-Gurion, who became Israel's first prime minister after the Jewish state was created in 1948 and was ideologically opposed to the Lehi.

Shamir said he began to fear Giladi was "out of his mind." "Before me stood a man who was seriously endangering the mere existence of Lehi and all that was connected to it... I knew I had to take a fateful decision — and I didn't evade it... the decision was taken and executed," Mr. Shamir wrote.

Mr. Shamir was one of three men who led the Lehi — the Hebrew acronym for freedom fighters for Israel — after British police killed its founder



Yitzhak Shamir
Avraham Stern in 1942.
Lehi was the smallest and most hardline of three terror groups fighting for a Jewish state. It was known for assassinating high-ranking British officials.
There was an outcry in Sweden in 1988 when two Lehi veterans revealed their part in the 1948 killing of Sweden's Count Foke Bernadotte. Bernadotte was the U.N.'s first mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Djerejian hopes Geneva summit will be positive

TEL AVIV (AP) — U.S. Ambassador Edward P. Djerejian said Friday he was hopeful a weekend meeting between President Bill Clinton and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad will lead to "substantive movement" towards Israeli-Syrian peace.

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Assad are to meet Sunday in Geneva for talks in which Israelis hope Mr. Assad will spell out for the first time whether he is offering Israel the full peace it seeks in return for the Golan Heights.

"We hope that the results of that meeting will provide the basis for substantive movement forward in the Syrian-Israeli negotiations," Mr. Djerejian told reporters after an hour-long meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin Friday.

Mr. Djerejian said American officials were planning to arrive in Israel by Sunday night to brief Mr. Rabin on the Geneva meeting.

He declined to assess the chances for a breakthrough or say whether Mr. Rabin had indicated what his reaction would be to a positive statement by Mr. Assad.

It was the first meeting between Mr. Rabin and Mr. Djerejian, who took up his post Thursday. The ambassador, who speaks Arabic and is a former U.S. envoy to Damascus, is viewed by many in Israel as a potential mediator in the negotiations.

The Maariv daily reported Friday that U.S. diplomats have informed Israel secretly that Mr. Assad is ready to publicly accept the "magic formula" of diplomatic relations and full normalisation in areas like trade and tourism.

Also Friday, Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said he expected a quick resolution in this round of talks with the Palestinians, due to resume Monday.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel 7711-19

PROGRAMME TWO
1730 Feature Film "L'Heritier" part 1
18:00 News in French
19:15 News in Arabic
20:30 News in Hebrew
21:00 You Bet Your Life
21:10 Jordanique
22:00 News in English
22:10 "Island Story"
22:20 The Golden Palace

PRAYER TIMES
05:11 Fajr
10:42 Sunrise
12:10 Dhuhur
13:45 Asr
16:28 Maghreb
18:19 Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweileh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 622785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624594
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 627440
De la Salle Church Tel. 627457

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622566
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 627441
Anglican Church Tel. 638551, Tel. 628543
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 773261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 625226
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624128
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 624195
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 624952
Church of Nazareth Tel. 678001
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER
Balkans supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be partly cloudy and windy with westerly moderate to active in Amman, partly cloudy weather conditions will prevail, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
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JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

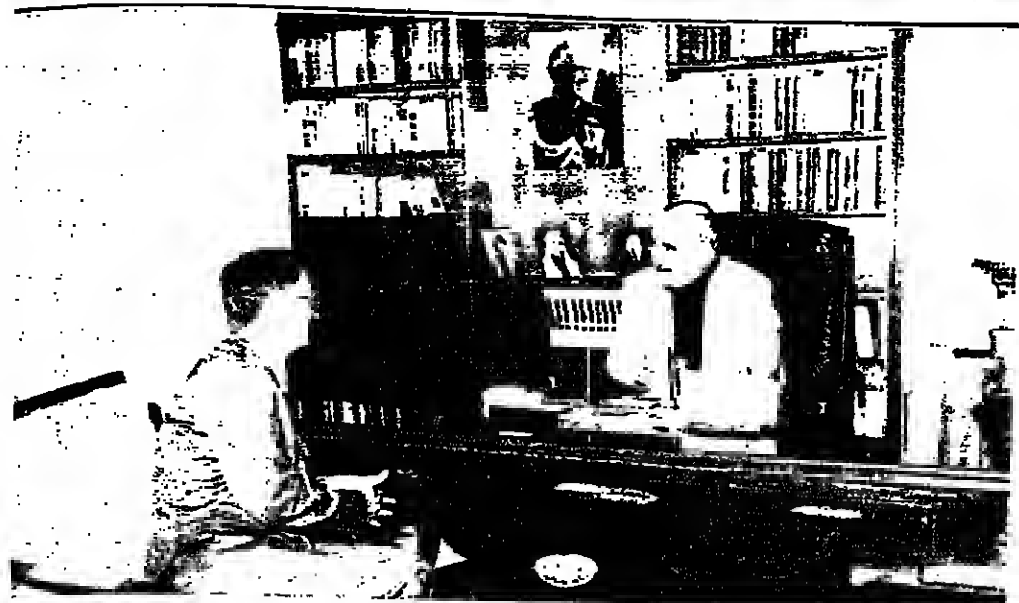
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NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Fakhr Taweh 585880
Dr. Basim Qadumi 586553
Dr. Youssef Al Faghi 590888
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad 584070
First pharmacy 601012
Second pharmacy 601012
English pharmacy 601012
Al Asma pharmacy 601012
Nanoub pharmacy 601012
Al Salam pharmacy 601012
Syrian pharmacy 601012
Nab pharmacy 601012

EMERGENCIES
RIBDI:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 601012
Al-Qadhi pharmacy 601012

HOSPITALS
ZARQA:
Dr. Issa Omer 901206
Khaldun pharmacy 901206

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DISCUSSING RADIO, TV PLANS: His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the regent, Saturday visited the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation and met with its director general, Radi Alkhas and his assistants. The Prince was briefed on the corporation's plans and production of programmes. He also toured part of the corporation's sections (Petra photo)

Princess Basma leaves for meeting on development

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Saturday called on the United Nations to corroborate its social, economic and environmental roles around the globe to help build up individual nations' capabilities in these fields.

The new facts emerging in a post cold war era bring out numerous challenges which call for increased United Nations attention, said Princess Basma shortly before leaving for New York to attend a special U.N.-organised meeting to discuss development.

The world organisation has set up a special high level advisory task force to help formulate concepts and future programmes for the United Nations development programmes in the current decade.

The coming U.N. meeting reflects the organisation's deep concern for the need to enhance socio-economic and environmental concepts which will be acted upon in cooperation with world governments.

Among the issues emerging around the world in the post cold war era, said Princess Basma, are poverty, natural and environmental catastrophes, famine, refugees, and the break up of communities, all of which endanger mankind and world security.

The components of peace comprise human rights, respect of mankind's dignity, democracy and protection of the environment which, she said, go hand in hand with socio-economic development.

The Princess stressed the need for new modern patterns of management and financing of socio-economic programmes and close cooperation among world nations.

Thanking the United Nations for electing her as a member of the task force to deal with these questions, Princess Basma said her election represented an appreciation of Jordan as a country with pioneering experiments in the field of socio-economic development.

Arab union officials seek to enhance work

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates of labour unions from seven Arab countries gathered in Amman Saturday for a two-day workshop on workers' rights and means of bolstering the work of their unions.

Organised by the Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions (FJLU) in cooperation with the Brussels-based International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the meeting is primarily aimed at providing the ICFTU's expertise and experience to Arab labour unions and in the areas of organisation, democratic orientation and furthering labour movements in the Arab World.

According to FJLU officials, the delegates will discuss problems and difficulties facing their respective unions, issues such as depriving workers of their rights, especially in third world nations, and questions of concern to Arab labour federations.

Khaled Shreim, FJLU secretary general, welcomed the delegates who included representatives of labour unions in Palestine.

Mr. Shreim outlined Jordanian labour laws and regulations and workers' gains, privileges and rights.

Referring to the workshop, he said it was organised in view of the urgent need of the Arab labour unions for advice and guidance concerning labour-related problems, workers' rights in forming unions, and other topics.

ICFTU representative George Martinez noted in an opening speech that the rights of labour unions are basic to the labour movement. Without workers' rights there can be no labour movement, and it is imperative that labour activists learn about workers' rights in order to organise a defence of those rights, said Mr. Martinez.

Seminars, workshops and gatherings to discuss labour issues are legitimate methods of highlighting the rights of workers, he added.

According to Mr. Shreim, delegates will review several working papers on topics such as labour legislation, human rights, social and economic situations in the Arab region, and violations of workers' rights.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Malhas urges private hospitals to extend emergency care

AMMAN (Petra) — Health Minister Abdul Muhaimin Malhas Saturday urged private hospitals to offer medical services to emergency cases under any circumstances. To a circular sent to these hospitals, Dr. Malhas said the private facilities can ask for any form of guarantees other than cash and obtain the hospitals' financial aid after providing the necessary medical treatment.

Yarmouk, JUST heads meet Kirghiz minister

AMMAN (Petra) — Yarmouk University President Mohammad Kamal Saturday received visiting minister of higher education in the Kirghiz Republic, Askar Kakiev, and discussed with him the establishment of scientific and academic cooperation between the university and universities in the new republic. Dr. Kamal briefed Mr. Kakiev and the accompanying delegation on the establishment and development of the university. Mr. Kakiev and the delegation also visited the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) where they were received by University President Kamel Al Ajlouni. Discussion at the meeting focused on academic cooperation between JUST and Kirghiz universities.

RJ to fly to new Al Ain airport

ABU DHABI (Petra) — Director of Civil Aviation at Abu Dhabi International Airport Sheikh Hamdan Ben Mubarak Al Nahayan Saturday discussed with a delegation representing Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national air carrier, the inauguration of a new route between Jordan and Al Ain International Airport once it opens. Sheikh Mubarak voiced his delight over having RJ as one of the first airlines to use the airport. Jordanian ambassador to the United Arab Emirates Awad Abu Obeid, who was present at the meeting, said RJ's operation of the new route affirms the brotherly relations between Jordan and the UAE.

JPMC discusses 5-year plan

SHIDIYEH (Petra) — The board of directors of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) Saturday held a meeting at its premises in Al Shidiyeh phosphate mines in southern Jordan and discussed the company's five-year development plans. Company Director General Sameh Al Madani said. Mr. Madani said the meeting focused on financial matters in addition to issues pertaining to increasing the company's production. The board also discussed the prospect of expanding the Shidiyeh mines, the industrial complex in Aqaba and other projects.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly listings and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

Photo exhibition by artist Muwaffaq Al Shethkh at the Royal Cultural Centre.
Art exhibition by artist Sadik Kwaish entitled "Talasma" at Baladna Art Gallery.
Exhibition of Iraqi books at the Royal Cultural

Centre.
Permanent exhibition of contemporary Arab artist and "Chair" exhibition at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh.

POETRY RECITAL

Recital of Ibrahim Nasrallah poems (to be sung by Kamal Khalil) to late music at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh at 7:00 p.m.

Iraq to continue supplying oil to Jordan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Iraq has agreed to continue supplying oil to Jordan under an exemption granted by the U.N. Security Council during talks in Baghdad last week between Jordan's energy and natural resources minister and Iraqi officials, informed sources said.

They said Minister Walid Asfour held a series of talks starting with Iraqi Oil Minister Safa Hadi Juwad and other ministers as well as Prime Minister Ahmad Hussein Khudayir.

Dr. Asfour also met with presidential adviser Jaafar Dhia Jaafar, reports from Baghdad said.

During the talks, Iraq agreed to renew the annual

agreement on oil supplies to Jordan and the accord could be formalised soon, said one source. No details of the agreement were immediately available; nor was it known whether it differed much from the 1993 accord.

Under a tacit exemption granted by the U.N. Security Council, which imposed a sweeping international embargo against Iraq following Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, Iraq is allowed to export oil to Jordan.

Jordan gets an average of 50,000 barrels of crude oil and 20,000 barrels of fuel oil from Iraq trucked overland daily to the Kingdom's refinery in Zarqa.

No cash is changing hands in the deal since the oil is supplied partly free and partly in

settlement of Iraqi debts to Jordan.

The sources said the main purpose of Mr. Asfour's visit to Baghdad, where he arrived Wednesday, was to renew the oil agreement and that he also held general discussions on Jordanian-Iraqi ties and prospects of cooperation after the expected lifting of sanctions.

"The (Iraqi) government is highly hopeful that the sanctions could be lifted before April, although U.N. officials have said that it could not be done before June," said a diplomatic source.

According to the source, the Iraqi government, which accepted long-term monitoring of its weapons programme late last year after a protracted stand-off with the U.N., was focusing on the work of U.N.

inspectors in Iraq with a view to getting a clean certificate from them before March.

"Iraqi officials have been holding extensive discussions with representatives of major international oil companies on post-sanctions cooperation," said a highly-informed diplomat. "These included American as well as European, particularly French and Italian firms."

Also expected to be raised during Dr. Asfour's visit to Baghdad was Jordanian concern over the impact of the reopening of Iraq's Umm Qasr Port on the flow of Iraq-bound cargo through Aqaba.

In talks in Amman in late November, Iraqi officials assured Jordan that the flow of Iraqi imports, which has dwindled to 20 per cent of pre-crisis levels, would con-

tinue and that Umm Qasr, Iraq's only outlet to the Gulf, would be used to accommodate small freighters with cargo from the far east.

The U.N. Security Council is due to meet on Tuesday to decide whether to maintain the international embargo against Iraq.

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported late Saturday that Jordan and Iraq signed an agreement in which they agreed to cooperate in "all key oil industries, including excavating and digging."

The agreement covers bilateral cooperation in all the sectors of the oil industry, including drilling and exploration, along with Iraqi technical assistance for the Jordanian oil industry and training for Jordanian oil workers, INA said.

AFM trading continues upward swing

Commercial banks benefit from doubling of trade volume

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Trading in the Amman Financial Market (AFM) continued an upward swing, with the weekly volume doubling in two weeks, figures released by the market showed Saturday.

Shares worth JD26.565 million changed hands during the week ending Thursday compared with JD13.46 million in the previous week.

In the parallel market, where shares of companies with not fully paid up capital are traded, the volume went down to JD2.32 million from JD2.77 million in what brokers described as a small indication of investors' shift to stocks of established companies.

Commercial banks were the main beneficiary in the surge in AFM trading, after investors zeroed in on them following the signing of the Jordan-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) economic cooperation accord on Jan. 7.

The banking sector accounted for more than 40 per cent of AFM trading in the last two weeks.

Among other things, the Jordan-PLO accord clears the way for the reopening of the branches of Jordanian commercial banks in the occupied West Bank, closed when Israel seized the territory in the 1967 war.

Shares of the Bank of Jor-

dan, one of the banks poised to reopen in the West Bank, closed Wednesday at JD4.890, compared with JD4.570.

Arab Bank shares went up an opening price of JD201 in the week, but closed at JD191 on Wednesday. Brokers said the decline was partly because of official statements that banks will be only allowed to reopen their West Bank branches one by one.

The Arab Bank, Jordan's largest commercial bank, was earlier reported to be preparing to open more than 10 branches in the occupied territories.

Bankers and officials said one of the main reasons for the rise in the stock market was the lifting early this month of certain curbs on commercial bank credits. While the decision by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) did not immediately pump in huge amounts into the market, it did help boost investors' confidence in the national economy, they said.

Omayya Tougan, director-general of the AFM, was quoted as saying: "the increase in activities at the stock market is a result of the Central Bank of Jordan's decision, which boosted investor confidence, and the economic agreement signed between Jordan and the PLO."

"Both moves have created a kind of optimism that is



The trading floor at the Amman Financial Market (photo by Aynsley Floyd)

reflected in all trade and investment activities," Dr. Tougan said.

Brokers said it was also natural that investors' interest remains high in the beginning of the financial year when most firms release annual figures. As such, they said, there was always a minimum level of trading in stocks during January higher than earlier months.

This level, they said, was boosted by the additional factors that came into play after the recent CBJ moves and the Jordan-PLO agreement. "It is a combination of factors," said a veteran brok-

er. "The lifting of ceilings on certain sectors of commercial credits and the signing of the agreement worked together with normal trends in the beginning of the year in the stock market."

Nearly 115 companies with equity valued at market prices at JD3.5 million are listed at the AFM. Trading in the market hit a record JD969 million in 1993, with the first seven months of the year accounting for 75 per cent of the volume before the PLO and Israel unveiled their secretly worked out autonomy agreement and heralded several months of uncertain-

ty over Jordan's role in the peace process and regional economy.

That uncertainty was cleared to a large extent by the signing of the Jordan-PLO agreement on economic cooperation.

"Of course, the signing of the Jordan-PLO economic agreement injected a fresh impetus into the market, but a lot remains unclear," said a banking official. "Investors are looking for some detailed insight into the actual economic role Jordan and the Jordanian private sector will be playing in the Jordanian economy."

Jordan, Yemen sign customs memo

AMMAN (Petra) — A team from the Yemeni Customs Department Saturday wound up a nine-day visit to Jordan by signing a memorandum paving the way for cooperation with the Jordanian Customs Department in several fields.

Under the terms of the memorandum, Jordan and Yemen will exchange information related to smuggling operations and will coordinate efforts related to customs work, tariffs and other customs-related affairs.

The two sides also agreed to organise training courses for customs officers, exchange expertise and information related to technical work such as defining prices, analysis, classification, temporary entry of goods and the treatment of semi-finished industrial products.

The agreement also covered programmes for exchanges of visits by officials from the two sides and cooperation in upgrading administrative functions.

Yemen is to benefit from the Jordanian experiments in preparing lists of customs tariffs, airport customs work and customs operations at ports and border posts.

The memorandum was signed by Mohammad Jamal, director of customs and Abdul Rahman Kahali, head of the Yemeni Customs Department.

During the visit Mr. Kahali and his team toured the customs offices in Amman, Ramtha, the Zarqa and Aqaba free zones, Queen Alia International Airport as well as the Mudwara Customs Office in the south-east.

The Yemeni team later left for home.

Minister to outline Kingdom's achievements in environmental protection at international forum

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Ahmad Akaileh Saturday said that he would present several working papers dealing with the environment in Jordan at an international meeting in Buenos Aires opening Monday.

The papers will outline Jordan's achievements with regard to environmental protection as provided for in the National Strategy on the Environment which was prepared in cooperation with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), said the minister in a pre-departure statement.

Organised by the IUCN,

the meetings are scheduled to last until Jan. 26 and be attended by delegates from nearly all the world's nations, said Mr. Akaileh, who will head the Jordanian team to the meetings.

The delegation will take part in at least three workshops at the international gathering in the Argentine capital to discuss environment-related issues, according to Mr. Akaileh.

The team will coordinate its stand with the other Arab delegations attending the meeting, especially in matters related to environmental planning, the creation of national parks, setting up of wild life reserves and legislation cover-

ing the environment.

More than 3,000 delegates are expected to attend the international meeting which is held at the General Assembly level once every three years, according to Mr. Akaileh.

The Switzerland-based IUCN was founded in 1948 in order to promote the conservation of natural resources by the scientific monitoring of their conditions, mobilising scientific and professional resources to investigate the most serious conservation problems and recommend solutions.

It also develops programmes to help countries devise and carry out conservation projects.



Ahmad Akaileh

Police arrest theft suspect in Irbid governorate

IRBID (Petra) — Irbid police Saturday reported the arrest of a man suspected of stealing from cars.

Brigadier Hashem Al Qaisi, the police department director here, said that a search for the suspect was launched when the department received repeated complaints by car owners who reported that items left in their cars had been stolen or tampered with. The theft victims said their cars were parked in front of their homes.

At least 13 complaints were made at various police stations in Irbid governorate over the past few weeks, Brig. Qaisi added.

In the course of investigations, he said police placed a

man, identified only as H. H.M. from Jerash district, under surveillance.

When police arrested the man, said the Brigadier, he was in possession of a gun.

According to Brig. Qaisi, the suspect was interrogated and admitted to stealing several items from cars including radio cassette players, cash and small bags as well as home appliances which he said he had found on a bus in Reimoun town, near Irbid.

Meanwhile in Amman the Public Security Department (PSD) Saturday reported that 434 road accidents occurred in Jordan in the first week of January, resulting in six deaths and injury to 389 persons.

Department assists 460 needy families

SOUTH SHUNEH (Petra) — The Social Development Department in the South Shuneh district has given recurrent assistance worth JD 165,000 to 460 needy families during 1993, according to department director Miflch Al Jaghbeer. Mr. Jaghbeer said the department has also presented urgent help to 12 needy families. The department, he added, also allocated JD52,000 income-generating projects for 43 poor families.

Produce export society registration approved

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Society for the Export of Fruits and Vegetables Saturday said that it has secured approval for its official registration.

A society spokesman said that registration would help the society organise and encourage Jordanian exports of fruits and vegetables and enter into new markets abroad in cooperation with the support from Jordanian authorities.

The society will begin on research, management and encouragement of exports of new types of fruits and vegetables, advise farmers on modern means of harvesting crops, as well as packaging and transporting produce, said the spokesman.

He said that the society will also publish daily bulletins of produce prices in international markets and the amounts and specifications of fruits and vegetables required in world markets.

The announcement coincided with a statement by the Agricultural Marketing Orga-

nisation (AMO) that Jordan's fruit and vegetable exports to foreign and some Arab states increased noticeably last year.

AMO Director General Saleem Lawzi said that Jordan's exports of these products increased by 224 per cent to non-Arab states, 92 per cent to Bahrain, 19 per cent to Lebanon, 17 per cent to Qatar and 13 per cent to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

According to Dr. Lawzi, tomatoes accounted for 44.6 per cent of total exports, followed by oranges and cucumbers.

But, he noted, lesser quantities of eggplants, peppers, lemons and marrow were also exported to these countries last year.

At the same time, Jordan's imports of fruits and vegetables in 1993 dropped by around 38.8 per cent over the previous year.

Jordan, he said, imported onions, dates, apricots, apples, potatoes, cherries and grapes last year.

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Encounter in Geneva

PROGRESS OR the lack of it in the Middle East peace process depends, to a large extent, on the outcome of the summit that will be held today in Geneva between Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and U.S. President Bill Clinton. Syria and the U.S. hold between them quite a few cards that are essential to resolving the more intractable aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Syria has been not only a main party to the conflict between the Arabs and Israel since the start of the Palestine issue early in this century; it has also been a major player in regional politics as a whole. Together with Egypt, and at times with Iraq, Syria has been a leader among the Arab parties to the conflict. Although at the moment it has little influence on the PLO leadership, the prime interlocutor of the Israelis, it still yields considerable influence on a sizeable Palestinian opposition based in Damascus and active in the West Bank and Gaza. Without Syrian blessings to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's peace efforts, he will find it difficult to control Palestinian opposition in the occupied territories, satisfy Israeli demands for security and meet the demands of Palestinians for a democratic society.

Syria is, at the same time, the main power broker in Lebanon. With help from Iran and Iranian-backed Hizbollah party in Lebanon, Syria can block any agreement between that country and Israel as it did in 1983. Jordan, on the other hand, has consistently said that it would not go for separate peace with Israel and would rather insist on a comprehensive settlement that would essentially include Syria, Lebanon, as well as the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, the U.S., the strategic ally of Israel and the sole superpower in today's world, is seen by many players in the region as being capable of contributing heavily to the kind of shape that the region will take for decades to come. The U.S. has been fully involved in the region's affairs since the early 1950s. Besides, Washington has, in addition to Israel, at least three main allies in the East Mediterranean region: Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. While Egypt and Saudi Arabia might not be too powerful allies in terms of ultimate strategic considerations, at least as far as Syria is concerned, Turkey has to be taken into account each time Damascus takes a major political move.

Syria has genuine fears of being ultimately squeezed between the two powerful regional allies of the West: Israel and Turkey. The issue of the Golan Heights, per se, is not on top of the Syrian agenda. President Assad has repeatedly said that Syria could live without the Golan for decades. But Syria cannot certainly live very soundly without Lebanon or in a region where Israel is the sole regional power. Syria has been under Western pressure for a long time and it will not certainly yield to any sort of American pressure unless at least its legitimate security demands are met. President Clinton will have to listen to what Syria wants in other spheres, of course, but the U.S. will also be keeping in mind that Syria will simply not vanish as a regional power at any time soon.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL DUSTOUR daily Saturday welcomed a declaration by presidents Clinton and Yeltsin, issued in Moscow, reaffirming their desire to establish peace on the basis of U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and the exchange of land for peace. The paper said that the declaration assumes added importance, having been issued on the eve of the Assad-Clinton summit in Geneva, Sunday, and one on which so many hopes are attached to give real and serious momentum to the peace process. The reaffirmation of the U.N. resolutions by the co-sponsors of the peace process is vital and for the process's success and could help put an end to Israel's intransigence, said the paper. It should be noted, said the paper, that the Israelis are continually trying to escape from any commitment for withdrawing forces from the occupied Arab land and are stalling withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho areas as agreed with the PLO. Indeed, the Clinton-Yeltsin declaration serves as a positive introduction to the Geneva summit and could give the American role more effectiveness in terms of forcing the Israelis to succumb to the will of the international community, added the daily. It said that the Arabs have offered all they can towards reaching a permanent settlement and it is now up to Moscow and Washington to see to it that their declaration would not be regarded by Israel as mere ink on paper.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour criticised the lengthy and tedious speeches by the Lower House of Parliament members who, he said, had resorted to rhetoric reminiscent of those of the mid 1960s. Saleh Al Qallab said that the lengthy speeches attracted no listeners as they tackled matters that have been discussed over again with no particular action taken on the part of Parliament to deal with them on the ground. The writer said that the speeches were more or less resembling those heard during the election campaign and served no purpose but merely temporarily appeased citizens who had elected the deputies in their respective districts. We had hoped that the deputies would not resort to these futile tactics but rather support the views of their own financial committee, whose members they all chose, to present their views with regard to the fiscal budget, said the writer.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

GATT — a tempting unknown

GATT is an abbreviation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Its main objectives are the elimination of quotas systems in trade, the reduction of customs taxes and the removal of all restrictions that hinder the free flow of trade among nations.

Originally, the agreement was signed in 1947 by 23 nations. The number of participants rose steadily to reach 117 states. The purpose is to facilitate exchange of goods to maximise mutual benefits among the member states, encourage more specialisation and promote exchange of commodities instead of closing the borders.

Last month GATT entered a new era and more advanced stage, as the 117 nations reached a new accord after seven years of tough negotiations and hard bargaining. It was finally agreed that the closed and protected markets will be open up for international competition.

The GATT agreement includes several exceptions which secure flexibility to address the various circumstances of different countries, especially developing ones. Preferential treatment is still allowed if it takes place in the context of regional cooperation. Therefore, an Arab common market or an Arab customs union does not violate GATT provisions. Economic boycott on political grounds is also permissible. Joining GATT therefore does not necessarily affect the Arab boycott against Israel as long as the state of war continues to exist.

The GATT agreement allows temporary reasonable protection to domestic production and infant industries. There is nothing in the agreement that obliges a member state to import commodities that contradict the religious and cultural traditions. Members can ban certain books, films and other material. Such items could not be imposed under freedom of trade.

If and when Jordan joins GATT, the world's vast markets will be wide open to its exports without discrimination. Jordan

is obviously a small country open to the international markets. No important and efficient industry can be established in Jordan if it is dependent solely on its small domestic market. Exporting is the key for growth.

However, joining the GATT has its costs as well. Member states cannot increase their customs taxes, impose quantitative quotas on imports, discriminate against other members, prevent importation of certain goods by way of protection, tighten currency controls or impose excessive fees on transit. An international court of justice is set to resolve differences and prevent violations. It is not that difficult for Jordan to adapt itself to the above conditions. As a matter of fact, most of these conditions are already fulfilled.

There is a big disagreement among Jordanian economists in their views on whether Jordan will be better off joining GATT, or keeping out and shutting itself away from the world market. Traditionalists and reactionaries still consider any international accord as a capitalist plot to exploit developing countries. They claim that GATT will make the rich even richer, and the poor even poorer. More liberated and up-to-date economists, on the other hand, try to take the world as it is. They support joining the GATT and taking advantage of the huge international market. They reject the notion of isolation and closure.

Even the expected rise of up to 10 per cent in the prices of certain food items has its positive side. It will encourage local farmers who were previously unable to compete with cheap and subsidised food imports like milk and wheat.

Having said that, I should admit that the available information about the new GATT agreement is too meagre. Not one study has been made yet to quantify costs and benefits of joining GATT. Everything that has been said so far by our economists, including this article, is still at the stage of personal impressions. No final judgement can be passed until after in-depth study, based on the right information.

Is there hope still for Africa?

Serge Michailof is an expert on the economics of development with vast field experience. He joined the World Bank a few months ago. In this article he talks to Marie-Pierre Sabti and Jean-Pierre Turqui of Le Monde about development problems in sub-Saharan Africa.

What is the economic state of health of sub-Saharan Africa?

Bad, unfortunately. Even allowing for the fact that statistics, which are very worrying, need to be handled with caution, there are unmistakable danger signals: the continent's dwindling share of world trade, the increase in its cereal imports, debt explosion, financial crises affecting almost every country, rural exodus, urban unemployment.

In some areas where swift progress was made in previous decades, there has even been regression, with deindustrialisation and a deterioration of basic public services, health and education. And although farm output has increased, it still can't keep pace with a fast-rising population.

How has this deterioration come about?

People put it down to the fall in raw material prices and worsening trading conditions, which is tantamount to pinning most of the blame on the outside world. That's a little facile and not very convincing. For how do you explain the success of some Asian countries which have been subject to the same external constraints? South Korea, whose income per head used to be similar to Ghana's at the time when the African countries were gaining independence, has now overtaken Portugal economically and is hot on the heels of Greece.

The crisis arose from a succession of serious errors of economic policy and from mismanagement. This is a damning indictment of the African elites, yet still a hopeful sign: for while nothing can be done about market forces, economic policies can be changed — look at China — and management improved.

Aren't cultural constraints to blame too?

It was fashionable 30 years ago to regard southeast Asia as doomed to go hungry for ever. Experts were pessimistic about Asia because they regarded the heritage of Confucianism as incompatible with industrial development. Such theories now look very silly. Cultural constraints do exist, but too much shouldn't be made of them. Information isn't properly circulated in Africa; the family in the broadest sense has too much influence, as do clan networks; and the way wealth is accumulated encourages Mafia-like systems which militate against a transparent economy and prevent the market economy from working properly.

But such obstacles are by no means insurmountable, as long as radical reform comes soon. The governments of eastern Europe, when facing a rather similar situation, realised the need for reform and tried to make up the ground they had lost in double-quick time. Most African leaders prefer to blame international speculation and cultural constraints. It's true that speculation is harmful, but behind their arguments there's obviously a wish to keep things as they are.

French and African academics

Africa needs is not authoritarian states — it's had all too many of them, with disastrous results — but regimes with backbone, which is not the same thing. Such regimes are trusted by the elite and the population at large because they fix their objectives clearly and spell out the stages needed to attain them. Surely present-day Poland can't be described as an authoritarian state?

Africa needs countries that are capable of imposing unpopular reforms. The transition from stagnation to development isn't a natural one. It entails a major drop in income for some social groups. That's why most countries which took that road were prompted by fear — Japan was afraid of the West, South Korea of its northern neighbour, Thailand and Malaysia of communism, Tunisia of fundamentalism, and Mexico of social disintegration.

What development co-operation policy should France have towards Africa?

France has an important role to play at this crucial point in time, when the future may turn out in all sorts of ways. We're to continue the way we have been going, our development cooperation in the next century would probably consist of little more than emergency aid for refugee camps and cash for this or that warlord we had decided to support.

Today we can facilitate the implementation of the economic reforms that are indispensable for Africa's development — but there is no way we can

much in our interest, as a country whose companies operate in or trade with Africa, and whose population has difficulty in assimilating African immigrants, that Africa develops quickly and becomes a market of a billion consumers, a region whose peoples are not forced to emigrate, and a zone of stability.

Africa's economic failure and demographic growth, the highest in the world (the continent's population is now doubling every 20 years), will lead to violent upheavals unless something is done. Without economic growth, we may find a situation like that in Liberia or Somalia spreading everywhere. It may still just be possible to avert disaster in a country like Somalia. But if a whole chunk of the continent begins to go to pieces — I'm thinking of the region around Zaire, the forest-covered countries bordering on Liberia, Nigeria and its region — then the situation will get quite out of control.

What's the answer to these problems?

The organisations involved in French development cooperation and their staff have enormous experience. But their effectiveness depends mainly on the goals they are assigned. If they are just expected to support certain regimes unconditionally, they will not operate in the same way they would if their task were to encourage development effectively.

France supported the regime of the outgoing Madagascan president throughout the eighties. Wouldn't it have been better to turn off the tap? The country's economy has been destroyed by a regime notorious for its incompetence and corruption.

Development co-operation that aims genuinely to serve the interests of both France and Africa should encourage good management instead of trying to put out fires that have been tolerated, and sometimes even lit, by irresponsible leaders.

Is it still wise to give massive aid to African governments?

Most so-called "structural adjustment aid" in fact goes to shoring up national budgets. One wonders what exactly it adjusts. It tends to be provided on a virtually permanent basis and has the perverse effect of allowing the postponement of measures that will sooner or later have to be introduced anyway. It is a strain on the French budget, amounting to over FF4 billion (\$460 million) — more than the emergency budget recently earmarked for France's deprived city areas — on top of the cost of debt cancellation.

The "a way of using these sums more intelligently. They should be directed into what is known as sectoral adjustment aid," which is targeted to specific goals, arranged on a contractual basis with our African partners, and designed to put their economies on a sounder footing. It is pointless to try to push through a wholesale reform of any African economy at top speed, for no African government, particularly a democratic one, has the resources to fight on every front at the same time. A sectoral approach means that problems can be singled out and solved one by one.

Is democracy losing its romance

By Michael Kinsley

BACK IN the 1980s, when hawks were hawks and doves were doves, it used to be said that democracies do not fight each other. When doves argued for "peace" in, say, Central America, the hawks answered that the best assurance of peace in any region was the establishment of democracy, even by violent means if necessary. Once established, democratically elected governments will never choose to spend the people's blood and treasure making war against their democratically elected neighbours.

It's a nice thought. Unfortunately, it's been disproved in Yugoslavia, where the fall of communism has brought a vicious three-way war. Serbia and Croatia, both under democratically elected presidents, intermittently fight each other while jointly dismembering democratic Bosnia. Serbia had a parliamentary election Dec. 19 in which all the parties supported Serbia's aggression — although it has left the country a basket case. The Yugoslav mess is one reason some former hawks have become more dove-like.

They have lost their interest in promoting democracy. They look at the postcommunist world and see that the most common cause of war is nationalist hatred — which democracy, far from suppressing, actually gives vent to.

Is democracy starting to lose its romance? It seems like an odd question. On the map of the world, democracy is having a great run. It has triumphed over the Soviet empire (well, details to be worked out in some places); it has conquered South America; it has arrived in South Africa. And yet at the same time you can sense a certain world-weary disillusion setting in.

This can be seen, for example, in the way western observers keep moving the goalposts for that hero of democracy, Boris Yeltsin. Democracy lovers have been remarkably understanding as Mr. Yeltsin has shut down newspapers, produced a constitution out of his hip pocket that makes him a virtual czar, forbidden candidates in the recent election to criticise his constitution on television, put off for years his own need to run for reelection and so on. This was all justified as an "interim" necessity in order to establish Russia on a democratic course. But if Mr. Yeltsin continues to govern in a style one journalist predicts will be "enlightened authoritarianism," it's a safe bet the apologetics will continue.

The model here, of course, is China. While Russia is struggling to reform the economy and the political system at the same time — sinks ever deeper into poverty, China, which is trying capitalism without democracy, grows richer at an astonishing rate of 13 per cent a year. China's leaders still aspire, at least, to a totalitarian regime. Dissidents are still arrested, and the government recently outlawed all satellite dishes. But it would be hard to argue honestly that China's approach has served

the average citizen worse than Russia's.

The case for the Chinese model is that while democracy and capitalism may go together, democracy and the conversion of an economy to capitalism do not. Economic reform is chaotic; it makes things worse before they get better; it creates new inequalities that take getting used to. Capitalism, in short, needs an authoritarian government to push it through. Then, when widespread middle-class prosperity is securely established, democracy will naturally follow.

A less attractive version of this argument leaves out the last step. It holds that concepts like "democracy" and "individual rights" are western notions, which (unlike, apparently, the western concept of "capitalism") are out of place in consensual Asian cultures. Singapore and Taiwan have thrived on capitalism without democracy.

The ethnically Asian President of Peru, Alberto Fujimori, sometimes likes to imply that he is importing this "Asian culture to South America. Early in 1992 he shut down the courts and the congress, abolished civil liberties and began ruling by decree. The result? The Shining Path guerrillas, who were strangling the country, have been almost beaten; the economy is thriving and Fujimori is highly popular. "Traditional democracies will end up in the garbage heap," he told a Peruvian magazine.

Even in the heartland of "traditional" democracy, the United States of America, there are whiffs of disenchantment. The "populism" surging through American politics these days has a certain anti-democratic flavour. Or, at least, it reflects a resentment of democratic institutions and procedures. "Washington" and politicians have replaced "Wall Street" and rich businessmen as populism's favourite targets. The favourite populist remedies — congressional terms limits, a balanced-budget amendment — would be new constraints on democracy. And, like earlier versions, today's populism batters for a strong leader on a white horse. Thus Ross Perot, America's would-be Fujimori.

On the other hand, the conventional response to today's populism in America also has an antidemocratic tinge, as high-minded commentators bemoan democracy's incompatibility with low taxes, the paralyzing effects of interest groups and so on.

As the movie *The Remains of the Day* reminds us, there was a time not long ago, the 1930s, when openly expressed doubts about the wisdom of democracy as a system of government were positively fashionable, even in established democratic societies. These days everybody pays at least lip service to the democratic ideal. Will that change? Just asking — Time magazine.

LETTERS

'Unwise' decision

To the Editor:

I would like to express my utmost concern with Pope John Paul II's unwise decision to recognise the state of Israel while Israel maintains its occupation, oppression, crimes and racism against the Christian and Muslim Palestinians and denies them their rights to self-determination, independence and their right to return to their homeland.

This is a setback and a negative development in the relations between the Catholic Church and the Muslim people.

As Israel is the main beneficiary of the Pope's move, he has done a great damage to the Vatican, not only in the eyes of Muslims, but in the eyes of all honourable people in the world. I find it repugnant that the Vatican and Israel agree "to fight racism and intolerance" while Israel is the most brutal, racist and intolerant state in the world.

The Vatican cannot equate its establishment of relations with Jordan with its recognition of Israel. There is no relevance here, nor will this put an end to Israel's brutal military occupation and racism against the Palestinian people.

Mohammad Ali Haddad,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Things can get hairy off-piste

By Tim McGirk

I TOLD my Tibetan cook that I was going to Kashmir to search by helicopter for a beast whose tracks — larger than a man's — had been spotted by a Swiss ski guide near the summit of a 4,000m Himalayan peak. "It's the yeti," said Dolma matter-of-factly. Then she gave me a useful piece of advice. "Yeti's very angry. If yeti starts chasing you, never run up the mountain — always go down," Dolma said.

Why, I asked. My Tibetan cook replied with unfailing logic: "Yeti has long, long hair and when he runs down, hair falls in his eyes and he cannot see where he is going."

Whenever I told friends that I was off to look for weird animal tracks, they either laughed or offered strange bits of yeti-lore. In Nepal several years back, I learnt, a Japanese tourist tried to buy a yeti scalp that was among sacred objects in a remote Buddhist monastery. It is hard to say what one could do with a yeti scalp — use it as a tea cosy? — but anyway the abbot refused. That same night the red, shrivelled and hairy scalp was stolen, and the Japanese tourist was never seen again.

Someone else told me of a shepherd attacked one night by a creature larger than a bear. It burst into his hut and would have torn him apart if the dogs hadn't driven it off. This is supposed to have taken place in the same Kashmir range of the Himalayas where the ski guide found the mysterious tracks.

The only person who did not seem prepared to jump to the conclusion that the tracks belonged to the abominable snowman was the man who discovered them, Sylvain Saudan. "I don't know what kind of animal they belong to, but I'd like to find out," said Saudan, a skier and mountaineer. He had sent photographs of the tracks to the Natural Museum in Paris and to another museum in Munich requesting identification. "Both places said that although their studies were not conclusive, the tracks did not correspond to any known animal," says Saudan, who also sent copies of the photos to the National Geographic

Society in Washington and awaits its reply. "Judging from the prints, the Paris experts think this animal weighed about 48 kgs, Mr. Saudan says. A robust, strong-jawed man in his fifties, Mr. Saudan is known in France and Switzerland as *skieur de l'impossible* for his daredevil exploits. He made his reputation skiing down near-vertical mountains in the Alps and Himalayas, where a fall meant instant death.

Now Mr. Saudan is running an outfit called Himalaya Heli-ski, which flies out of Kashmir. His clients are very, very rich European and Americans; they own department stores, factories and banks. They are the kind of people who collect antique Ferraris or who can afford to hire their private ski instructor with them to Kashmir (a week's heli-skiing costs \$3,700). They are not your usual crack-brained abominable snowman hunters.

"I don't believe in yeti legends," says Mr. Saudan carefully, "but it's hard to think that in mountains as immense as the Himalayas there isn't something out there that we don't know about."

On 3 May 1991 at 10 a.m., Mr. Saudan spotted a new peak that looked ideal for skiing. It was high, more than 4,000m, with a broad, sweeping descent. There was no wind, and in the shadows cast by the rocky summit, the snow was still feathery. The pilot, Gilles Verdan, eased down the helicopter on the mountain's broad shoulder, about 100 metres from the summit. Mr. Saudan, along with another guide, Daniel Semblant, from Chamonix in France, and three other companions jumped out with their bundles of skis and poles. When the blizzard whipped up by the departing helicopter cleared, they had a fine view of the Himalayas. Then, not more than 20 metres from where the helicopter had left them, the skiers noticed the strange animal tracks.

"From a distance, I thought these are a man's tracks," recalls Mr. Saudan. "But there was no reason for a man to be up there — the nearest village was a three-day walk." He added: "This creature did not take the easy way up the mountain, otherwise we would

have seen its tracks, all the way up. No, this creature seems to have climbed up the back side of the mountain — a 1,000m wall of rock and ice. A bear couldn't have done it, and a man could only have done it if he had ropes and his name was Reinhold Messner."

Baffled, Mr. Saudan and his companions followed the tracks upwards towards the crest of the mountain. "When a man climbs in deep snow, he digs his toe in first, makes a little step. But whatever made these marks didn't climb like that. Its feet were flat against the snow," says Mr. Saudan. "I'm not a hunter, but to me, these tracks looked fairly fresh. In some of the tracks, you could see what looks like the imprint left by two large toes."

Mr. Saudan and his companions measured the tracks, which were bigger than a ski boot, and snapped off about 80 photographs. Seven skiers, the helicopter pilot and co-pilot all saw the tracks. The creature had walked up within easy range of the summit, then veered across the face of it before disappearing down the same sheer cliff of rock and ice. "A man never would have done that — a man would have climbed to the top and had a look around, after all that effort," Mr. Saudan says.

The party radioed back to the helicopter. Mr. Gilles, the pilot, zoomed down the back of the mountain and picked up the mysterious tracks as they crossed a wide snowfield. "I lost the trail in the rocks, and from there on down the valley it was all wooded." After 30 minutes, they called off the helicopter hunt. "I had the impression that he knew we were there and organised himself to get lost very quickly," Mr. Gilles says.

Mr. Saudan warned me that I would require the strongest possible lens to see this creature — or even its footprints — during two days' flying. We met at Himalaya Heli-ski's base at the Hotel Centaur, set in the fruit orchards on the far side of Dal lake from Srinagar. Apart from Saudan's skiing clients, the hotel's other guests were all military officers. Indian security forces are fighting against Muslim separatists in

Kashmir, and at night, the sound of gunfire drifted across the lake from the old city. Few tourists dare venture into Kashmir these days.

The helicopter ripped across the lake, and we looped upwards, leaving behind the Moghul gardens and mustard fields and headed towards Tibet, entering into the vast, towering whiteness of the mountains. Gazing at the Himalayas, which cover thousands of square miles from Bhutan up to Afghanistan, Mr. Saudan and I talked of why, if a yeti does exist, it is not seen more often. "Most of the mountain people have no reason to go up into the peaks. They don't really know what's up there." The only humans who do venture deep into the Himalayas are mountaineers, says Mr. Saudan, but they are only interested in peaks above 5,000 metres, where there is little oxygen and no small animals or plants to sustain a 48 kg creature. The yeti, or whatever it is, evidently does not share man's desire to conquer mountains.

Mr. Gilles is an experienced mountain pilot who knows how to ride the icy updrafts rolling off the peaks, the way eagles do. As the Lama helicopter skims over hurred forests of white birch and pine, Mr. Verdan and his co-pilot scan the frozen landscape for signs of life. Rarely do they see anything. "I've been flying here for three years, and you know what I've seen? Two bears, a fox and a troupe of white, long-haired monkeys. That's all. There are so many places for an animal to hide," Mr. Verdan told me as the helicopter roared up through an icy ravine. In Europe, the treeline usually ends at about 3,000 metres. Here, temperatures are milder, and the forests often stretch up to 4,000 metres, giving cover and food to wildlife.

I cannot look at a mountain covered with snow, anywhere, without imagining how I would ski down it. After flying for half an hour, the temptation to give up the yeti hunt and put on skis grew unbearable. Finally, Mr. Saudan directed the pilot to a south-facing peak, and the helicopter deposited us

at 4,000 metres and zoomed away. The silence was magnificent. Light-headed from the lack of oxygen and exhilaration, I felt weightless, as though I'd soon drift off the edge of the mountain and float. It was an agreeable sensation until I realised I was standing next to a 500 metres precipice. I backed away, anxious to join the other skiers' huddle. Mr. Saudan checked that our avalanche bleepers were on, and then he poled off, cutting turns like rhythmic explosions in the deep, sparkling powder. I followed, with more exuberance than grace. After a mile or so of steep, but not perilous, open bowls, we descended into a forest of pines and white birches that looked as though they were wrapped in parchment.

There were no yeti tracks, but I was past caring. The skiing was easier than I had imagined; a French couple in their mid-sixties, after initial jitters, were first into the helicopter, clamouring for a second run. We made nine runs down four mountains that day, about 30 kilometres of uninterrupted skiing. I had the wild impulse to withdraw all my life savings, pawn my furniture and have my children go without supper and shoes, just so that I could go again and again. Heli-skiing in the Himalayas is exquisitely addictive.

That evening, Mr. Saudan showed me photographs of the tracks, but he refuses to let them be published until the National Geographic Society has analysed them. "If National Geographic say they know what kind of creature made the tracks — a bear or something — then I'll drop the matter," Mr. Saudan claims. And if it is a yeti?

"I don't want to capture it. I've always thought this vast world of mountains is not like a dead, icy planet, and that it contains animals unknown to us. Maybe big ones. It would be enough to have proof that this creature does exist. But I'm not going to go charging off looking for it," Mr. Saudan says, laughing.

"The Himalayas are a big place. It's enough to see its footprints." — The Independent



Pristine slopes for daring skiers in the Himalayas

Priorities could converge in Geneva

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Assad and Mr. Rabin out of the "you-first" cycle. "The major strategic issues between Israel and Syria have already been resolved. It will be an opportunity in Geneva for Assad to explain what peace will mean when he gets guarantees of an Israeli pullout," said the diplomat.

Syrian Vice-President Abdel Halim Khaddam said two weeks ago that recognition of and normalisation with Israel are negotiable. Mr. Rabin followed up on the comment saying he was ready to discuss full peace for full withdrawal.

Mr. Assad is unlikely to let Mr. Clinton down. He knows that the peace process has as much to do with Syrian-American relations as it does with Syrian-Israeli relations. In return for Mr. Assad's announcement, Mr. Clinton will likely stress the importance of Syria in the peace process and offer to play a full partner in Syrian-Israeli talks.

When the issue of Lebanon comes up in the three-hour meeting, Mr. Assad has no serious problems: Both Israel and the U.S. have tacitly accepted Syrian dominance of its neighbour and today Lebanon is treated as an afterthought.

In his travel last month to get the parties back to the negotiating table, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher met twice with Mr. Assad, twice with Yasser Arafat, and once with King Hussein. Rafik Al Hariri, the

Lebanese prime minister, had to make due with a telephone call.

To guarantee Israel security on its northern border, Syria has to curb the Iranian-backed Hizbollah. Mr. Assad now has a greenlight from Tehran to do just that, according to diplomats. Iranian officials assured Damascus it will maintain its strong ties with Syria even if it disarms Hizbollah and even if it signs a peace deal with Israel.

For Mr. Assad, improving relations with the sole superpower in the world today is a top priority. For the time being Syria will remain a member of the club of nations which the U.S. accuses of sponsoring "terrorism." But the U.S. could be paving the way in the future for removing Syria's name off the list, especially if there is a breakthrough in the peace process. The last State Department report notes "no evidence that Syrian officials have been directly involved in planning or executing terrorist attacks outside Lebanon since 1986."

Mr. Clinton will certainly raise the issue of Palestinian factions opposed to the peace process based in Syria. Mr. Assad provided a haven for opponents of the process, namely the 10 Palestinian groups known as the "Damascus 10."

Mr. Assad, in his fourth meeting with a U.S. president, will try to focus on bilateral issues and his role in the area in American thinking.

Syrian-American relations

have developed since Damascus joined a U.S.-led multinational force which drove Iraq from Kuwait in February 1991 and helped free Western hostages in Lebanon.

Mr. Assad has made several goodwill gestures to the U.S. ahead of the summit. Syria, harshly critical of the PLO's secret deal with Israel, made a volte-face last week.

It joined seven other Arab states in describing the Israel-PLO deal as the first step on the path to peace. "The ministers... studied developments since the signing of the Palestinian-Israeli declaration of principles, which is considered as a first that should be complemented by steps on other tracks to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region," said a communique issued by the foreign ministers of six Gulf countries and their allies, Syria and Egypt. This was not highlighted in the local press.

To win support on Capitol Hill, Mr. Assad gave exit visas to the last 800 Syrian Jews. He also is helping a U.S. congressional team investigating the fate of seven Israeli servicemen, who went missing in Lebanon in 1982.

Since the beginning of the peace process, Assad's main strategic goal is to improve relations with the U.S. This goal is more important than the Golan, said a European diplomat. "Assad is patient, he can wait for the Golan."

Simultaneous with the diplomatic approach to Syria, Washington has also been active in trying to induce Damascus to become more pragmatic in the peace process through incentives. It has implicitly approved the transfer to Syria of three American-made Boeing passenger planes from Kuwait — as a gift and is believed to have influenced a decision by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to announce a \$700 million aid package to Syria.

The European parliament recently unfroze an assistance programme for Syria.

Damascus, whose economically is relatively independent of the West, is known to be seeking aid with no strings attached, and is unlikely to accept any internationally-monitored aid along the lines that the Palestinians were promised after the signing of the Sept. 13 accord.

House endorses draft budget

(Continued from page 1)

of the country.

He also rejected what he called the gloomy picture some deputies painted of the economic situation in Jordan, adding that his government rejects this image but added the government welcomes "constructive criticism."

The prime minister said the administrative reform and decentralisation programmes would lead to the creation of an effective bureaucracy and would be accompanied by legislation that would facilitate their success.

Responding to criticism about Jordan's intention to join the GATT agreement, Dr. Majali said the Kingdom would join the agreement only under terms acceptable to it and in harmony with its policies.

Dr. Majali also said the government plays a strong role in the economy, pointing out that the government's expenditure amounts to 35 per cent of the GDP and the public sector employs about 40 per cent of the labour force.

He said Jordan's foreign debt had to be paid because the country stood to suffer more if it defaulted on paying back its debts.

President of the Finance Committee Ali Abul Ragheh said that some deputies were influenced by ideological beliefs in their discussion of the budget, rejecting the accusations that the panel's recommendations were not adequate.

The draft budget law will now be referred to the Upper House of Parliament. It will become law after it is approved by the Senate and signed by His Majesty the King.

Gulf war claims at least \$7b

(Continued from page 1)

companies in Kuwait have submitted claims for corporate losses.

The Jordanian government has estimated at \$3 billion its national losses from the influx of over 350,000 citizens who were forced to leave Kuwait.

This covers costs of extra medical services, education, and energy. It also reflects losses suffered by Jordanian corporations whose traditional Gulf markets disappeared.

Following are excerpts from Mr. Gammoh's reply to the deputies:

— The government is trying through its various programmes and plans to address the problems of poverty and unemployment. The policy is to support certain segments of the population through subsidising basic commodities.

— Jordan has to continue to reduce the deficit in the budget gradually to make it reach 2.5 per cent of GDP in 1998.

The Ministry of Finance has taken measures to achieve a comprehensive tax reform through revising the income tax, customs duty and the sales tax laws to reduce the burdens shouldered by citizens and to make them clearly understood by investors.

— The government will refer to the Lower House amendments on the laws of investment encouragement, companies and the investments encouragement department to make them fit the current era and to attract investors.

— The Central Bank of Jordan will review legislation with a view to making credit facilities flexible and suitable for the investment requirements.

— The sales tax conforms with Article 12 of the Constitution in that it rises as the income rises and vice versa and it includes many exemptions.

— The sales tax law will be offered to the House for approval after being endorsed by the Cabinet. "You will debate, and you will have the right to approve, amend or reject it, whatever you see fit for the national interest."

— The government has updated the currency exchange law to make it fit the needs of

the present time and suit investment requirements. The government has prepared a study on the establishment of a corporation for guaranteeing deposits and is working on a draft law on monitoring the work of banks and expanding the Central Bank's role in this regard.

— The economic restructuring programme aims to achieve a six per cent growth in the GDP at constant rates and between 5.5 and 6.5 per cent during the programme's period from 1994-98.

It also aims to reduce the deficit to 6.4 per cent of the GDP to 1993, and 5.3 per cent in 1994 and to reduce it gradually towards the end of the programme period to make it reach 2.5 per cent.

The programme also provides for maintaining inflation at around 4.5 per cent during the programme period.

— Jordan will reap several benefits as a result of implementing the programme, including enabling it to reach agreement with the Paris and London clubs of creditors on rescheduling its debts, allowing Jordan to receive loans from the World Bank and Japan, transferring a \$32 million grant from the European Union to Jordan, and receiving about \$40 million in loans from Japan and the World Bank to carry out water and energy projects.

Implementing the programme will also enable Jordan to get additional financial support in the form of grants and soft loans from other countries and international and regional organisations to address the gap in the balance of payments, which is estimated at about \$400 million annually, and this will help stabilise the Jordanian dinar exchange rates and increase Jordan's reserves of hard currency.

— The government is working on reducing the deficit in

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— The government is working on reducing the deficit in

the budget and the 1994 budget shows a deficit of about JD 156 million, which might rise to JD 456 million if Jordan repays some of its debts. The deficit is estimated to be 5.8 per cent of the GDP in 1994, and this percentage is expected to drop to 5.3 per cent at the end of 1994.

— This budget is the first since 1963 which does not show an additional deficit after adding the expected grants and loans.

PLO upbeat over Geneva summit

(Continued from page 1)

transfer of civil authority to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho, but there was no progress on security issues that have delayed the Israeli withdrawal.

Dr. Shaath said he was going to Tunis to attend a meeting of the PLO Executive Committee, due to start there Saturday and brief PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat on the Taba talks, which are due to resume on Monday.

He will also hand Mr. Arafat a letter from President Hosni Mubarak on "Egyptian support for the Palestinian issue."

Dr. Shaath, a top Arafat aide who leads the PLO delegation to the talks, charged in an interview with Egypt's Middle East news agency that

Israel was stalling.

"This might be because they are waiting for results of the Assad-Clinton summit or because we didn't accept the Cairo paper as a final agreement," he said.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said as negotiations in Cairo ended Dec. 30 that "a meeting of the minds" was reached on introducing autonomy in Gaza and Jericho. The Israelis later portrayed it as a full-fledged agreement, which the PLO as quick to deny particularly on the question of border control.

"To sum up the situation of the talks now, it is conflict between the largest amount of Palestinian freedom and dignity and the eternal Israeli struggle for its security," Dr. Shaath said.



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Word must stem population to feed itself, report says

WASHINGTON (R) — The world appears near the limit of its ability to produce more food, and its exploding population must be controlled if people are to be adequately fed in coming decades, the Worldwatch Institute said in a report released Saturday.

Growth in food production has slowed dramatically as the earth's ability to produce is being pushed to its limits, soil and water resources are being degraded and exhausted, and benefits from new technologies are diminishing, the annual "State of the World" report by the Washington think tank said.

"Achieving a humane balance between food and people now depends more on family planners than on farmers," said Lester Brown, Worldwatch president and the report's senior author.

Mr. Brown said the "growing demand for food and the earth's physical capacity to

satisfy those needs may dominate the next four decades as much as ideological conflict dominated the four decades from 1950 to 1990."

At a news briefing, Mr. Brown said this year's report was unusually grim because "we have enough data now. Unfortunately, now I think we can see more of the constraints emerging more clearly," including a leveling off in grain yields and in the seafood catch.

This comes as the world's population is projected to jump by 3.6 billion, or 90 million annually, in the next 40 years.

"Seldom has the world faced an unfolding emergency whose dimensions are as clear as the growing imbalance between food and people," Mr. Brown said.

He said a growing awareness of the earth's limited capacity to produce food calls for revamping population policies, and increasing international

efforts to make family planning measures available.

The per capita seafood catch, which fell nine per cent from 1989 to 1993, likely will continue to drop, the report said.

Grain production, which expanded nearly three per cent annually between 1950 and 1984, since then has dropped to about one per cent annual growth — largely because expanded use of fertilizer no longer is yielding big returns.

Mr. Brown cited shrinking world rice stocks as Asia's consumption has outpaced production for the last three years and said Japan's farmers have not been able to increase yields over the last decade despite tremendous economic incentives.

"With grain yields now plateauing in some countries, with the fish catch unlikely to increase much, if at all, and with rangelands widely overgrazed, there is an urgent need

for national assessments of population-carrying capacity," the report said.

Mr. Brown recommended a global effort to assess food needs versus population growth for the next 40 years to provide "information needed to establish a public dialogue on choices in the tradeoff between family size and consumption levels."

"Without this global effort, countries with soaring import needs will have no way of knowing whether exportable supplies will be available," the report said.

And, Mr. Brown said, a global effort is needed to make family planning services available to all who want them.

He said a measure often cited as a key to feeding more people — cutting use of grain to feed livestock in the industrial countries and increasing food assistance to the developing world — would have little impact.

Oman authorises banks to raise \$300m loan

MANAMA (R) — Oman has authorised a group of four banks to arrange a \$300 million five-year syndicated loan, the sultanate's first sovereign borrowing in more than two years, bankers have said. The credit will be used for general purposes, helping to finance the budget deficit — forecast to be close to \$800 million in 1994 — as well as development projects, they said. The four arranging banks are the Bahrain-based Gulf International Bank (GIB), the Chase Manhattan Bank N.A., of the United States, Commerzbank A.G. of Germany and Japan's Bank of Tokyo Ltd. Oman, which produces about 760,000 barrels per day of oil, has suffered from falling oil prices like other petroleum exporters. Discussions on this loan began several months ago before the sharp fall in prices. Its last loan, also for five years and \$300 million, was signed in October 1991.

Sachs says Western aid to Russia fails inflation test

PRAGUE (Agencies) — Jeffrey Sachs, the Harvard economist who advises President Boris Yeltsin, said Friday Western aid had failed to head off growing popular discontent in Russia because it did nothing to curb inflation.

In an interview with Reuters, Mr. Sachs was sharply critical of all aid packages offered so far, including one pledged by U.S. President Bill Clinton during his visit to Moscow last week.

Mr. Sachs, who works as an economic consultant for Mr. Yeltsin, said the best way to stabilize Russia's tottering economy would be to control inflation by using Western money to help shrink the state budget deficit, estimated this year at \$24 billion.

He said the Group of Seven (G-7) nations, the world's richest industrial countries, should put together a \$14 billion Western cash infusion to replace the piecemeal approach to aid the West had been following so far.

On Friday, the Clinton

administration promised to work with G-7 countries to free up \$1.5 billion in International Monetary Fund (IMF) credits already planned as part of a Western aid package.

"(This) package... isn't really designed towards what I think is the greatest risk that the Russians face and what we face, which is continuing very high inflation and high social instability in Russia," Mr. Sachs said.

"So, the nature of the package would have to be altered," he pointed out.

U.S. officials also said they were seeking additional funds from international banks for unemployment and hardship programmes to help cushion the speed of reform in Russia. But Mr. Sachs said these measures were inadequate not only because they fell short of the amount needed, but because the IMF-centred approach avoided the primary problem of monetary instability.

Mr. Sachs' Russian recipe for reform calls for stabilising the rouble by helping the government to stop printing money to finance the budget deficit. But he said the IMF refused to consider direct financing of the deficit because it first required politically sensitive cuts of up to 10 per cent in gross national product (GNP).

"They (the IMF) are living in a dream world, it (the IMF approach) is just not realistic," he said. "And so one has to make a realistic programme but actually put the numbers on the table. I doubt that even today in these meetings with Clinton... that this kind of scenario is being talked about."

Mr. Sachs, who was in Prague as the keynote speaker at

an international bond conference, said a G-7 backed \$14 billion financial aid package, including either a direct loan or buying long-term Russian bonds, would remove half the expected 1994 budget deficit.

Moderate cuts in industrial subsidies would be offset by an increase in social safety-net spending, he said. The parallel sale of domestic Russian bonds would leave only about two per cent of GNP to be financed by printing money.

Mr. Sachs said a huge anti-Western backlash was building up in Russia because of a glaring discrepancy between Western promises of aid and Western delivery. Not more than \$5 billion of some \$28 billion in promised Western aid was delivered in 1993.

Leading Russian newspapers Friday ridiculed the amount of economic aid visiting President Clinton was offering Russia.

Noting Mr. Clinton's offer of about \$1 billion in new aid for the fiscal year, the liberal daily Segodnya newspaper said, "the sum is simply pathetic."

Mr. Clinton said Friday he would ask Congress for \$900 million in new aid to Russia in his budget for the next fiscal year, on top of \$2.5 billion voted for the current year.

He also said the United States would purchase \$12 billion worth of highly enriched uranium from Moscow over the next 20 years, and would provide technical assistance to help cushion the impact of economic reform on the Russian people.

Some Russian newspapers didn't seem to take the visit too seriously.

Rabochaya Tribuna, which means worker's tribune, ignored the summit.

Labour unrest in CFA zone may worsen with devaluation

ABIDJAN (R) — Devaluation of the CFA franc threatens to aggravate rising labour unrest to West and Central African states whose governments already have trouble meeting wage bills.

In theory, the parity adjustment from 50 to 100 to the French franc announced Tuesday night will give governments more cash in CFA terms to meet wage bills, but price rises for imports are also likely to trigger bigger wage demands.

Regional economists say while devaluation could boost industry in Cameroon and improve export earnings for Ivory

Coast, the world's biggest cocoa producer, it may only increase problems in poorer Sahel countries like Niger, Chad and Mali which depend on imports.

Ivory Coast is one of the franc zone's wealthier members but has been finding it increasingly hard to meet wage bills and suffered strikes in several sectors in late 1993.

The government came up with 30 billion CFA francs (\$102 million) at the end of the year to pay arrears in wages, student grants and retirement pensions.

The windfall prompted speculation in the opposition daily

La Voie as to whether the cash was a legacy from president Felix Houphouët-Boigny, who died on Dec. 7, a contribution from his wealthy successor Henri Konan Bedie, or aid from France.

In Chad, where provincial civil servants have not been paid for more than a year and the government has no cash to meet its wage bill, a public sector strike began on Jan. 3.

The government promised to pay two months' wages after France came up with 33.5 million French francs (\$5.7 million).

But the civil servants are still on strike because they say

officials in N'Djamena have received some of the cash and those in the provinces have nothing.

Cameroon's civil service has been paralysed for a month by a strike over a 50 per cent wage cut announced last November.

State radio said Prime Minister Simon Achidi Achu issued a strongly worded communique calling on strikers to return to work without delay and warning of unspecified measures to sanctions anyone who refused.

Some 55,000 secondary school teachers have been on strike since the end of November and many state hospitals

are closed or maintaining only emergency cover. Magistrates went on strike at the beginning of the year.

In neighbouring Central African Republic, striking customs workers complain they have not been paid for 15 months.

Further north in landlocked Niger, the government closed Niamey University Friday after students hurled stones and petrol bombs, battled riot police firing tear gas.

The students' grants have not been paid for eight months. In January 1993, the university cancelled teaching for the academic year because

of lack of funds.

Economists say with falling prices for its principal export, uranium, and manufacturing dependent on imports, Niger stands to lose from devaluation.

The CFA franc has been pegged at 50 to the French franc since 1948. In the past, a combination of falling commodity prices, loose fiscal and monetary policy and the appreciation of the French franc against the dollar has pushed up the CFA franc's value against other currencies, has paralysed regional economies,

Ivory Coast plunges into deep end with reforms

ABIDJAN (R) — Ivory Coast pushed ahead with its radical economic shake-up Friday and made no secret that the reforms triggered by a massive devaluation would be painful.

Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan announced price rises for petrol and rice but maintained his government's resolutely upbeat approach despite fears of inflation and labour unrest.

"When your mother put alcohol on your wounds it hurt but you knew it was for your long-term good," he said.

But at a three-hour news conference, he said social peace was essential for the rebuilding of the economy to succeed.

In a veiled warning to labour leaders already wanting big pay increases, Mr. Duncan quoted late president Felix Houphouët-Boigny's maxim that disorder would not be tolerated.

After 46 years of unchanged parity against the French franc, Ivory Coast and 12 other West and Central African states on Tuesday devalued their common currency, the CFA franc, by 50 per cent.

As the biggest and most modern economy in the CFA zone, Ivory Coast stands more to gain than smaller nations if it can keep inflation in check.

Mr. Duncan promised massive debt relief and injections of funds from Western nations, the IMF and the World Bank who withdrew support largely because of the over-valued CFA.

He predicted foreign investment in Ivory Coast this year would be 660 billion CFA francs (\$1.1 billion) and put growth at two per cent in 1994, compared with a zero level in 1993, rising to five to six per cent in 1995.

The success of the reform programme in Ivory Coast is vital to IMF and World Bank

hopes of reviving Africa's economy, the weakest in the world.

Failure will undermine efforts in the rest of the CFA zone.

"This is going to work. There will be no failure," top World Bank official Olivier Laforcade told reporters in Abidjan.

But the history of devaluations in non-CFA countries has been no great success and was for years France's argument for resisting any change in the CFA parity.

While the rich with money abroad get richer, victims include civil servants and young people hit by plunging levels of public spending on education and health. Price controls have usually failed and high inflation resulted.

Africa's political instability and weak infrastructure have deterred the predicted flood of foreign investors. Rich Afri-

cans with money abroad have tended to invest it abroad.

Ivory Coast, the world's biggest cocoa producer, believes it can break the mould with the backing of Western partners.

The government sharply raised prices paid to cocoa and coffee farmers with Mr. Duncan making clear he was more concerned about the welfare of rural Ivorians than city-dwellers.

The government announced salary increases for civil servants of between five and 15 per cent, much less than the inflation rate projections of government economists.

Private sector workers will have to negotiate the best deal they can with employers.

"We have already asked for 25 per cent," said Raymond Djadjo, head of the Bank Workers' Union.

"We know we cannot expect full compensation for devaluation but we will not accept a 50

per cent drop in our buying power," he said, voicing widespread fears that the government will be unable to control prices.

There were groans when Mr. Duncan announced higher petrol and rice prices — both items on a long list which the government said earlier should not be increased.

Mr. Duncan, an economist appointed premier last month, promised "severe penalties" for traders and shopkeepers who raised prices unjustifiably.

Foreign economists in Abidjan doubted the government could contain the prices of more than a handful of basic commodities.

Hours after Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan threatened protesters with "severe penalties," the trade ministry closed the biggest supermarket chain in West Africa in a crackdown on soaring

prices. "The government closed down the Prosumo Group's shops in Abidjan until further notice," said a manager at Hayat-Ivoire, the group's smartest supermarket and Ivorian expatriates and Ivorians buy French delicacies like fresh oysters and champagne.

Prices for both imported and local goods have soared in most of the 13 West and Central African countries which devalued their French-backed CFA by 50 per cent Tuesday.

Traders say they have to increase to settle outstanding bills to foreign suppliers or to finance new stocks.

Ivory Coast's employers' body CNPI asked the government on Friday for urgent guidance on prices and incomes policy.

Many businesses will prefer to shut down temporarily rather than sell at a loss.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY JANUARY 16, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES:

Eight good aspects make this a very special day when you should be able to handle delicate subjects with tact, finesse and good humor creating more accord with close associates and co-workers...

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Begin to live your life in such a way today that you become an inspiring example to others. Use that mental brilliance to help others with their problems, too.

TAURUS: (April 21 to May 21) If you exude charm and magnetism, you are able to gain favours you want from others. Make it a point to entertain key people, too.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) While you may not relish the duties which clutter your life, you may as well get them out of the way with good cheer and insure harmony within the home for some time to come.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) New systems come to your attention today and night which you would do well to plan to adopt for greater success and prestige in the future.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Rely on fine standards under which you were reared in planning future activities today, since they will stand you in good stead.

VERGO: (August 22 to September 22) Show your better nature

today and you attract those persons for whom you have a real liking and admiration and then you know greater generosity and happiness.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) Study of the finest philosophies of life will reveal a better path to tread in the future. Be happy and quietly get out and enjoy the theatre, hobbies, good friends.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You have an excellent opportunity now to prove that you are a loyal friend to keep people in your life, who seem to have drifted away of late.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You are now highly inspired how best to help others with their civic as well as emotional problems, which indirectly also helps you.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 21) By listening to the wise words of inspired preacher today, you find that you can raise your level of consciousness so that life becomes more fruitful.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) It would be well to sit quietly by yourself for some time and permit your intuitions to go to work for you.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Get in touch with associates informally today so that you can come to a better understanding and operate more efficiently together in the days to come.

THE Daily Crossword by Avery P. Bromfield

ACROSS

- 1 Decisive point
- 5 Full assemblies
- 14 An O'Neil
- 15 Root
- 16 Ransom d
- 17 Sweater makers
- 20 Corrode
- 21 Western show
- 22 Three
- 23 Flying drafts
- 24 Camp
- 25 Farm makers
- 32 Assisted
- 33 Ogle
- 34 Swiss Hagen
- 36 West aware
- 37 Creature
- 38 Burden
- 40 Terrible abbr.
- 41 Maintained
- 42 Barbershop sounds
- 43 The which hung
- 47 Sign
- 48 Galle
- 49 River of France
- 52 Kentucky College
- 54 Southern monogram
- 57 Henry Ford shop sign
- 60 Spoken
- 61 One of two
- 62 Neighbor of Cal
- 63 Head in Lyons
- 64 Noseone
- 65 High wind

DOWN

- 1 Fuel
- 2 Columnist
- 3 Barrett
- 4 Entry
- 5 A
- 6 TV actor
- 7 Advantage
- 8 Boy Sp.
- 9 Chopper
- 10 Dignified
- 11 Hun
- 12 Angered
- 13 Not so
- 18 Tendency
- 19 Muslim Vip
- 20 Once more
- 24 Stimulate
- 25 Purpose
- 26 Calico pony
- 27 Model
- 28 Clearing
- 29 NBA's Unseld
- 30 Sowell moon probe
- 31 Hot compress
- 35 Audio abbr
- 37 Yapp
- 39 Upon a
- 40 time
- 41 Term of
- 42 Employment
- 43 LBZ
- 44 Smile result, if times
- 45 Orange flower
- 46 Mide beer
- 49 Burns, for one
- 50 European river
- 51 Dutch km
- 52 Country in Scotland
- 53 QEO word
- 54 Mrs
- 55 Diners
- 56 Cutting
- 57 Implement
- 58 Job
- 59 Joker

Puzzle Solved:

ACROSS: 1. Point, 5. Assemblies, 14. O'Neil, 15. Root, 16. Ransom, 17. Sweater makers, 20. Corrode, 21. Western show, 22. Three, 23. Flying drafts, 24. Camp, 25. Farm makers, 32. Assisted, 33. Ogle, 34. Swiss Hagen, 36. West aware, 37. Creature, 38. Burden, 40. Terrible abbr., 41. Maintained, 42. Barbershop sounds, 43. The which hung, 47. Sign, 48. Galle, 49. River of France, 52. Kentucky College, 54. Southern monogram, 57. Henry Ford shop sign, 60. Spoken, 61. One of two, 62. Neighbor of Cal, 63. Head in Lyons, 64. Noseone, 65. High wind.

DOWN: 1. Fuel, 2. Columnist, 3. Barrett, 4. Entry, 5. A, 6. TV actor, 7. Advantage, 8. Boy Sp., 9. Chopper, 10. Dignified, 11. Hun, 12. Angered, 13. Not so, 18. Tendency, 19. Muslim Vip, 20. Once more, 24. Stimulate, 25. Purpose, 26. Calico pony, 27. Model, 28. Clearing, 29. NBA's Unseld, 30. Sowell moon probe, 31. Hot compress, 35. Audio abbr, 37. Yapp, 39. Upon a, 40. time, 41. Term of, 42. Employment, 43. LBZ, 44. Smile result, if times, 45. Orange flower, 46. Mide beer, 49. Burns, for one, 50. European river, 51. Dutch km, 52. Country in Scotland, 53. QEO word, 54. Mrs, 55. Diners, 56. Cutting, 57. Implement, 58. Job, 59. Joker.

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By Glasbergen



Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Print answer here: A

(Answers tomorrow)
Jumbles: DECAY TESTY AMPERE UNHOOK
Saturday's Answer: Why the locksmith could never relax at work — HE WAS KEVED UP

Algeria seen heading towards deal with IMF

ALGIERS (R) — Despite the risk of aggravating its civil strife, Algeria appears to be heading toward an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), sources close to the discussions said Friday.

"They have made progress on three key issues — devaluation, the removal of some price controls and the removal of price subsidies," said one source. "They (the IMF) feel that they can get an agreement relatively soon, say within three months."

Caught between foreign debt service, which eats up about \$9 billion each year, and depressed oil prices that may cut its export earnings below this level, Algeria late last year resumed talks with the IMF for a balance of payments support

loan.

In exchange, the IMF is pushing the country to reform its heavily state-controlled economy.

An Algerian technical team is due in Washington later this month for the next round of talks, which is likely to be followed by a new IMF visit to Algeria, said another source.

"I don't think that the talks are likely to drag on," he said. "But they (the IMF) will need to go back to Algeria... they need to have meetings at ministerial level to decide some issues."

The talks with the IMF, and the painful reforms that an agreement will probably entail, are particularly delicate for Algeria because of the civil strife that has gripped the

country for two years.

Economy Minister Mourad Benachene last week said Algeria would only make reforms it believed the country could stand, politically and socially.

But diplomats said that although the authorities are deeply worried about the social impact of reform, they had few options.

"The Algerians are very wary of pouring oil on what is already a smouldering fire," said a senior diplomat. "But what choice do they have?"

"They have no choice," said another diplomat. "At some point they simply will not have the money to pay the debt."

Prime Minister Redha Malek admitted as much last week. He said that of oil prices continued to fall Algeria would no longer be able to afford the service on its \$25.7 billion foreign debt.

Algeria must find a way to cut its \$9 billion annual debt

service in half, he said.

The country hopes to do so by what it calls "multilateral reprofiling," essentially asking selected creditors for bilateral debt relief while continuing to pay back others.

But diplomats said they did not think many of Algeria's main creditors, despite sympathy for its difficulties, would agree to give debt relief while other creditors continued to get paid.

"We wouldn't be willing to do a bilateral deal," said an official with one of Algeria's leading creditors. "If they do bilateral deals it simply is not fair burden-sharing."

As a result, diplomats say Algeria will probably have to accept a Paris Club debt rescheduling.

IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus said last week he was optimistic that Algeria would sign an accord precisely because such options are no longer unthinkable.

India hikes price of cooking gas

NEW DELHI (AP) — Trying to improve its own books, the Indian government has upped many household budgets by raising the price of cooking gas. It has announced a hike of 15 rupees (50 cents) on each cylinder of liquefied petroleum gas, to 94 rupees (\$3). Gas, which is under government control, is the staple fuel for most urban kitchens. An average family uses two 14 kilogramme cylinders a month. The government said by reducing its subsidy on cooking gas, it will save 2.38 billion rupees (\$80 million) annually. But it will be an extra burden for middle-class families already struggling to keep pace with an estimated nine per cent annual inflation rate. India has been under pressure from international lenders to reduce its budgetary deficit.

UAE stocks surged 24% in '93

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) stock market surged by nearly 24 per cent in 1993 as an economic upswing boosted prices of shares of all trading institutions, dealers have said.

Market capitalisation of the 22 banks and companies tracked by an unofficial share index jumped to 37.8 billion dirhams (\$10.3 billion) from 30.5 billion dirhams (\$8.3 billion) in 1992, they said.

It stood at 28.1 billion dirhams (\$7.6 billion) in 1991, and 24.3 billion dirhams (\$9.34 billion) in 1990.

The index, set up by the National Bank of Abu Dhabi in 1989 with a base of 1,000 points, also soared by around 22 per cent to 2,030.32 points on Jan. 1, from 1,654.20 points on Jan. 1 last year.

"It is the biggest increase ever registered in the UAE stock market," said Zuhair Kaswani, a leading stockbroker. "It's due to an economic

upturn and expectations most banks and companies will make record profits."

Economists attributed the business upswing to a surge in trade, the pillar of operations of most banks, and a large increase in 1993 government spending, which reached a 10-year high of 17.6 billion dirhams (\$4.79 billion).

Government expenditure in the UAE and other oil-rich Gulf nations has remained the driving force in the domestic economy given the relatively limited contribution by the private sector.

No figures were available on UAE trade for 1993 but it hit a record high in the first nine months of the year in Dubai, the main commercial centre in the Gulf.

Official reports showed it reached 46.4 billion dirhams (\$12.6 billion), most of which were imports from Japan, India and other countries.

Officials said the increase in

trade was due to a sharp rise in Dubai's reexports to neighbouring Iran and Kuwait, which are engaged in post-war reconstruction.

The reexport stood at 1.9 billion dirhams (\$517 million) and 686 million dirhams (\$187 million) respectively.

The UAE has no official market but the federal cabinet last week approved a memorandum from the economy and trade ministry on plans to set up an exchange.

Sharedealing is conducted by telephone through a handful of authorised brokers, who often complain of widespread manipulation.

This has scared away small investors and boosted domestic liquidity to a record 85 billion dirhams (\$23.1 billion) at the end of November.

Dealers said they expected another busy year in 1994 as the government has announced it has no plans to cut expenditure despite weak oil prices.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE - JORDANIAN SECURITIES				
ORGANIZED MARKET: STOCK PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 16/01/1994				
COMPANY'S NAME	TRADED VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ABJAB BANK	238,980	181.000	180.000	180.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	89,240	6.870	6.900	6.820
BANK OF JORDAN	196,120	4.990	4.900	4.880
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	1,410	3.100	3.080	3.050
JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	86,010	3.160	3.160	3.120
JORDAN TRADING BANK	9,007	5.900	5.840	5.790
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	75,290	3.190	3.170	3.140
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	247,720	3.190	3.170	3.140
ABJAB BANK	2,150	4.400	4.300	4.300
JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	66,020	4.720	4.600	4.750
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	1,710	8.000	8.000	8.000
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	31,710	4.250	4.150	4.250
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	444,360	3.030	3.000	3.010
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	3,046	4.030	4.030	4.030
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	3,510	3.100	3.100	3.100
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	3,000	4.000	4.000	4.000
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	75,290	3.190	3.170	3.140
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	12,720	3.700	3.680	3.650
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	3,420	3.450	3.400	3.400
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	111,020	2.410	2.410	2.350
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	609	1.370	1.370	1.360
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	730	7.200	7.250	7.350
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	43,390	5.320	5.150	5.150
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	19,270	0.750	0.750	0.770
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	17,487	4.100	4.100	4.040
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	196,860	1.770	1.700	1.700
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	22,257	14.000	14.000	14.000
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	111,920	3.330	3.300	3.290
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	96,120	3.420	3.400	3.340
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	310,050	3.120	3.080	3.100
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	30,490	10.250	10.250	10.250
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	2,144	7.450	7.450	7.450
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	23,397	7.650	7.650	7.650
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	4,480	11.000	11.000	11.000
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	53,480	0.450	0.450	0.450
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	2,602	1.150	1.150	1.150
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	29,214	2.510	2.500	2.500
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	1,210	0.380	0.370	0.380
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	198,992	17.000	16.900	16.900
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	5,844	2.510	2.470	2.470
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	40,480	10.350	10.350	10.350
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	29,900	3.650	3.700	3.700
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	3,137	1.600	1.600	1.600
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	9,288	0.380	0.380	0.370
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	323	2.500	2.500	2.500
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	3,396	2.220	2.180	2.160
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	280,676	1.330	1.330	1.330
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	2,602	1.150	1.150	1.150
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	47,756	8.100	8.050	7.950
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	3,600	1.500	1.500	1.500
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	12,484	3.430	3.420	3.370
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	17,020	3.290	3.280	3.250
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	6,293	2.680	2.620	2.650
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	118,584	5.150	5.700	5.740
GRAND TOTAL				3,264,793
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET				294,209
TRADED VOLUME IN THE PARALLEL MARKET				27,732

Financial Markets

U.S. Dollar in International Markets		
Currency	New York Close	New York Close
Sterling Pound	1.4970	1.4935
Deutsche Mark	1.7513	1.7503
Swiss Franc	1.4765	1.4785
French Franc	5.9385	5.9415
Japanese Yen	111.85	110.95
European Currency Unit	1.1165**	1.1080

Eurocurrency Interest Rates					
Date: 14/1/1994					
Currency	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH	12 MTH	
U.S. Dollar	3.00	3.12	3.31	3.62	
Sterling Pound	5.38	5.30	5.26	5.24	
Deutsche Mark	6.00	5.81	5.56	5.25	
Swiss Franc	4.00	3.65	3.75	3.53	
French Franc	6.40	6.18	5.87	5.50	
Japanese Yen	2.25	2.09	2.00	1.93	
European Currency Unit	6.56	6.31	6.06	5.62	

Precious Metals				
Date: 14/1/1994				
Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz
Gold	389.95	7.50	Silver	5.23
				0.115

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin		
Date: 15/1/1994		
Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7050	0.7070
Sterling Pound	1.0511	1.0564
Deutsche Mark	0.4023	0.4043
Swiss Franc	0.4762	0.4766
French Franc	0.1165	0.1191
Japanese Yen	0.6348	0.6380
Dutch Guilder	0.3596	0.3614
Swedish Krona	*****	*****
Italian Lira	0.0414	0.0416
Belgian Franc	*****	*****

Other Currencies		
Date: 15/1/1994		
Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.6570	1.8800
Lebanese Lira	0.040655	0.041765
Saudi Riyal	0.1875	0.1890
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.5100	2.5650
Qatari Riyal	0.1910	0.1923
Egyptian Pound	0.2050	0.2200
Omani Riyal	1.7980	1.8240
UAE Dirham	0.1910	0.1923
Greek Drachma	0.2765	0.3275
Cypriot Pound	1.3255	1.3775

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Sarajevo shelling eases after Bosnia threatens to boycott talks

SARAJEVO (R) — Shelling eased in the besieged Bosnian capital Sarajevo Saturday after the Bosnian prime minister threatened to pull out of Geneva peace talks.

But rivals continued fighting in central Bosnia, cutting off aid routes where the United Nations said it had to use force to extricate a blocked convoy.

After a day of shelling by Serbs marking their Orthodox New Year in which six people were killed, Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic threatened to boycott peace talks in Geneva next week unless the shelling of Sarajevo stopped.

Sarajevo Radio said Friday: "Speaking about the future of the Geneva talks, Silajdzic stressed that if the aggressor continues to destroy Sarajevo and other towns and to kill civilians during the Geneva talks, the talks will not be held."

Bosnia's Serb, Muslim and Croat factions are due to meet in the Swiss city next week to try to end the 21-month-old conflict. Talks between Muslims and Croats in Bonn this week ended without agreement.

Only a few muffled shell bursts were heard in the capital, enshrouded in heavy fog, Saturday morning, reporters based at Sarajevo's Holiday Inn Hotel said.

The United Nations said Serbs fired about 300 artillery and mortar rounds into the city Friday and Muslims responded with only 11 rounds.

The shelling, similar to an attack last year that marked the Orthodox New Year, was further defiance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), which threatened air strikes against Serbs unless they released their grip on the city.

The speaker of the self-styled Bosnian Serb Republic's parliament, Momislav Krajcinovic, issued the latest in a series of bellicose statements by the Serbs in response to the threat of NATO military action against them.

"Regardless of how unequal our position in that fighting would be, we would defend ourselves and use all means at our disposal for that purpose," he told a Serbian radio station.

Serbs Friday fired 340 shells at the Muslim town of Olavo, straddling a narrow corridor

from Sarajevo to the northern town of Tuzla, but the frontlines did not change, the U.N. military spokesman in Sarajevo, Colonel Bill Aikman, said.

Two civilians were killed Saturday when Serbs shelled Visoko, 35 kilometres northwest of Sarajevo, Muslim-controlled Bosnian Radio said.

In the southwest, Bosnian Croat forces bombarded the northern part of Mostar's besieged Muslim Quarter, killing one child and wounding four others, the radio said.

Fierce Muslim-Croat fighting was also reported in central Bosnia, notably around Vitez and Gornji Vakuf. Scores of people have been killed there since Sunday when Muslims launched a dawn offensive, attempting to capture the strategic Lasva Valley.

The fighting has cut off the main aid routes into central Bosnia where 1.5 million people are dependent on outside aid to survive the harsh Balkan winter.

A U.N. aid convoy remained stranded Saturday and its leader pledged that, however long it took, he would get a relief convoy through to a

besieged Muslim enclave being blocked by local Croats.

"I am prepared to stay forever. Because at the end of the day we will win," said Larry Hollingworth, a representative of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who has tried for three days to negotiate clearance for the convoy destined for the besieged Muslim enclave of Maglaj.

About 60 people blocked the road for a third day, demanding the Muslim-led Bosnian army free Croat prisoners in Maglaj in exchange for the release of Muslim detainees.

Another convoy was blocked between Gornji Vakuf and Novi Travnik Friday by about 200 Muslims complaining that they had not received enough humanitarian aid, Col. Aikman said.

"There was concern that another incident would occur in the area as a large amount of flour was taken off vehicles (in a previous convoy)," he said.

Col. Aikman said the convoy moved on only after a British U.N. military contingent escorting the convoy fired 15 rounds into the air to disperse the crowd.



U.S. President Bill Clinton speaks during a meeting with Russian youth at the Ostankino Television session in Moscow (AFP photo)

Clinton challenges Russian youth to redefine the nation's future

MOSCOW (USIA) — President Bill Clinton challenged Russia's young people to redefine their country's future as that of a peaceful nation intent on reaching their full human potential.

"I believe the greatness of a nation is the ability to redefine itself for every age and time," Mr. Clinton told a televised Russian Town Hall Meeting. "The young people of Russia now have the chance to show that a great power can promote patriotism without expansionism, that a great power can promote national pride without national prejudice. That, I submit, is your challenge."

Mr. Clinton spoke to the people of Russia via Ostankino, the central television centre that was the focus of the Oct. 3 showdown between President Boris Yeltsin's loyalists and anti-reform forces.

"Ostankino," Mr. Clinton said, "stands as a symbol of the power of free expression and of the brave sacrifices the Russian people have been making."

Mr. Clinton's opening remarks sketched the themes of his state visit to Russia — his vision of a peaceful, politically and economically integrated Europe without ideological divisions. He then took questions from the studio audience

and from viewers in other locations.

Mr. Clinton, a master of the intimate television talk format during the 1992 presidential campaign, appeared to establish rapport with his audience here — judging from the intent expressions and comments of his mostly youthful audience.

Maxim Woznyak, a medical student, felt Mr. Clinton might not have "a perfect grasp on the intricacies of Russian politics" but his advice "was worth attention."

Part jovial guest, part dedicated teacher, Mr. Clinton moved from the shortcomings of an imperialist state to the complexities of running a free market economy in an ever-changing world. He also proffered general advice and more specific guidance on how to seek — and win — political office.

One teenager said he had seen pictures of Mr. Clinton as a youth shaking hands with President John Kennedy and asked him when he thought of becoming the U.S. president, Mr. Clinton called the boy on stage, saying, "Come shake hands with me and maybe you'll be president of Russia some day" — but he also urged him to "work and get ready."

He told an older questioner interested in a political career

to "get the best education you can and involve yourself in politics.... Work on some problems people have. Try to develop a genuine interest in the real problems and hopes of ordinary people, because in a democracy the only way you can really keep going through all the ups and downs is if you really care what happens to other people as well as what happens to you in your own career."

Mr. Clinton told the Russian people they face a "crossroads, a difficult one. Will you define your future greatness in terms that were relevant to the past or terms that will shape the future? The younger generation of Russians will look back at this time with either gratitude or regret" depending on the answer, the president said.

He said the world is living "in a curious time," with science and technology making development of democracy more likely, but with hatreds based on religious or ethnic background still erupting. He called it "conflicts between the faces and forces of tomorrow and the forces of yesterday" and urged young Russians to make choices that "take full advantage of the incredible things that are in the world of today and tomorrow."

Police accused of tattooing on foreheads

AMRITSAR, India (AP) — The tattooing of the word "pickpocket" on the foreheads of four women has sparked a national outcry over alleged police brutality. The women say police in the northern state of Punjab tattooed their foreheads to settle personal scores. Police say outraged citizens branded the women after they picked someone's pocket. While it is not unusual in rural India for petty criminals to be punished by being paraded on the back of a donkey, with their faces blackened and wearing a garland of slippers, this is the first time that alleged felons have been tattooed. The incident has sparked a national controversy over the methods used by police to control crime. Disgraceful police conduct, wrote the mass-circulation daily, Indian Express, in an editorial. "What is cause for grave concern is the brutal manner in which police in Punjab have started dealing with women held for nothing more serious than suspected petty crime," said the newspaper. It published photographs of the women with the word "pickpocket" tattooed on their foreheads. The newspaper said the incident occurred because police in Punjab have been given extraordinary powers to deal with Sikh separatists.

Vicar was drunk at funeral

DURHAM, England (R) — A vicar who was so drunk he slurred his words, fell over and sang out of tune while conducting an early morning funeral is to be treated for alcoholism, church officials said. A church warden took over when Rev David Heron, 44, fell over at the crematorium service for Tommy Alderson, a 69-year-old miner, at Durham in northeast England. "The vicar was so drunk he could hardly stand up," Gerald Bryant, one of the mourners, said. "It was only 9:30 but it was obvious he had had a skiff. The church warden had to prop him up as he fell over. At one point he referred to Tommy as 'our dear departed sister'. He kept repeating himself and was singing at the top of his voice completely out of tune."

The bishop of Durham, David Jenkins, has apologised for Rev Heron's behaviour, but Bryant said: "Tommy was quite a character who liked a pint (of beer). He was probably laughing his socks off in his coffin."

Bardot condemns dolphinarium

PAPEETE, French Polynesia (AP) — Brigitte Bardot has called on the French Polynesian government to stop the construction of a dolphinarium and capture of six dolphins. In a letter to French Polynesian President Gaston Flosse, Ms. Bardot said she was "outraged and indignant" over the announcement that a dolphinarium would be built in the Moorea Lagoon. The project by Jay Sweeney, founder of the American company Dolphin Quest, would take up two hectares (4.94 acres) of the lagoon for six tame dolphins to play games and come in contact with humans. The dolphins would be locked up at night in two 5,000-metre-square (153,800 square feet) ponds and come out for several hours during the day for demonstrations and contact with swimmers. In her letter, Ms. Bardot said that the altered behaviour of animals in captivity has no educational value.

Bobbitt does not recall cutting off organ

MANASSAS, Va. (R) — A sobbing Lorena Bobbitt told a court she could not remember the moment when she took a knife and cut off her husband's penis as he lay in bed, Mrs. Bobbitt, speaking in a televised trial that has fascinated America, said under defence questioning that she acted after her husband John raped her — the final act in what she describes as a "reign of terror" by the hulky ex-marine and saloon bouncer during their four-year marriage. She got up to get a glass of water after the alleged rape in the early hours of June 23 last year, she said. "The refrigerator light was on. I saw the knife," she said, referring to the red-handled kitchen knife she used in the attack. Mrs. Bobbitt said many memories then crowded into her mind, including the first time her husband raped her, his attacks on her and the insults he had made to her.

Duchess of Kent converts to Catholicism

LONDON (R) — Cardinal Basil Hume, head of the Roman Catholic Church in Britain, Friday received the Duchess of Kent into the Roman Catholic Church after she left the establishment by deciding to leave the Church of England.

The Duchess Katharine was the first British royal to convert since King Charles II, who turned to Catholicism on his deathbed in 1685. In doing so, she went against an early 18th century law forbidding members of the monarchy from becoming Catholic.

The historic 45-minute ceremony was carried out by Cardinal Hume in a private ceremony at the archbishop's house, near the houses of parliament in central London, and the Duchess, 60, was accompanied by her husband, the Duke of Kent, who is grand master of the Mason's United Grand Lodge of England.

During the ceremony, the deeply religious Duchess made a simple pledge to adopt her new faith: "I believe and profess all that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches and proclaims to be revealed by God."

Cardinal Hume said afterwards: "She seemed very peaceful and at ease." Asked what the occasion meant for the Church of England, the cardinal would only say: "I have been through a marvelous spiritual experience tonight and I want to leave it at that."

Britain's monarch, Queen Elizabeth, is the head of the Church of England, created in the 16th century after Henry VIII broke with Rome so that he could divorce and remarry, and the duchess needed special permission to leave the church.

As well as her husband, Edward, who is 18th in line to Queen Elizabeth's throne, the duchess was accompanied by their three children in the ceremony.

A spokesman for the elegant and popular duchess said her move had nothing to do with the Church of England's decision to ordain women priests, which has alienated many churchgoers and prompted some of them to join the Catholic Church.

Traditionally, a member of the royal family who has married a Catholic has had to renounce any claim to the throne, but because the duchess was an Anglican at the time of her marriage the Duke of Kent's position will be unaffected.

Their son renounced his right to succession when he married Canadian Catholic divorcee Sylvana Tomaselli in 1988.

The Anglican Church's spiritual head, George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, called the duchess's step a "personal decision of a devout Christian on a spiritual journey."

Friends of the duchess, seen every year by tens of thousands of tourists at the Wimbledon tournament, said her conversion to Catholicism was purely personal.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Over 100 die in India boat collision

CALCUTTA (R) — More than 100 people were feared drowned when two pilgrim boats collided in the Bay of Bengal Saturday and one was torn in half, police said. One of the steam launches, the Ma Abbaya, was split in two by the collision and around 150 passengers were spilled into the water as they returned from a pilgrimage to the Holy Sagar Island, they said. They said 21 passengers and three crew had been found alive, but there appeared little hope for the rest even though divers were still searching. The collision occurred some 90 kilometres south of Calcutta in the early hours of the morning in thick fog, which hampered initial rescue work. Some 15 hours later, just 10 bodies, nine of them women, had been found. The two halves of the Ma Abbaya had been found some distance apart with no one clinging to them.

Mexico peace envoy cites advances

SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico (R) — Mexico's peace commissioner Manuel Camacho Solis said there had been "important advances" in efforts to end a 14-day peasant uprising in the southern state of Chiapas but warned that the peace process could be a long one. As Camacho pursued peace, fighting was dying out in the troubled region, the Mexican army said. A government official revealed that helicopters on loan from the United States to assist Mexican anti-drug operations had been used to support the government's counterinsurgency campaign. Mr. Camacho, named by President Carlos Salinas De Gortari earlier this week to seek an end to the bloody rebellion by the self-styled Zapatista National Liberation Army, said he was returning to Mexico City Friday to brief the president. "I think things are taking a suitable course. There are important advances," Mr. Camacho told a news conference before ending a three-day visit to the region.

U.S. cult trial jury sees charred remains

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (R) — A Texas Ranger testified in graphic detail Thursday about the horror of searching for evidence amid the body-strewn remains of the Branch Davidian compound. His evidence came in the second day of testimony at the murder and conspiracy trial of 11 Branch Davidian sect members. "All I smelled was rotten bodies. It was a horrible smell," said Ranger Roy Coffman, who stated many of the bodies were those of children. The dead were found in the rubble of the fatal April 19, 1993 fire that destroyed the Waco, Texas compound. Killed in the blaze were more than 90 Branch Davidians, including leader David Koresh and 17 children. Prosecutors displayed the charred remnants of a huge weapons hoard that was found in the compound remains.

Russia's Baltic force gets tough order

MOSCOW (R) — Russian troops in Latvia and Estonia have been told to return fire and shoot to kill if there are any attempts to seize their military installations, a Russian military statement said Friday. The North Western Command of Russian forces, which covers the Baltic region, issued the order following the temporary detention of two Russian generals and the blockading of four of their military installations in Latvia on Jan. 10. The order, read out on Commonwealth Television, said Russian troops had been instructed to "return fire and shoot to kill" in the event of any attempt to seize military installations. The Jan. 10 incident in which the two generals were led away by Latvian Civil Defence units prompted Moscow to declare a military alert. Latvian President Guntis Ulmanis dismissed an official, Andrejs Rucis, whose decision to seize two Russian army buildings had sparked the incident. The brief detention of Major-Generals Nikolai Tailakov and Anatoly Vodopyanov had threatened to further damage relations between the two states, which are holding talks over the withdrawal of former Soviet troops from Latvia.

German wheelchair girl surrenders

BERLIN (R) — A handicapped schoolgirl who disappeared after apparently making up a story about Skinheads carving a Swastika on her cheek has surrendered to authorities, German police said Saturday. A spokesman in Halle said the 17-year-old, who uses a wheelchair, vanished Thursday after police launched a nationwide search for three skinheads she claimed had attacked her Monday. Doctors have told investigators they believe the Nazi-embroidered scar on her face was self-inflicted. "We now know where the girl is," the spokesman said. "She is with her parents at a relative's house at a location far away from Halle. The relatives phoned us this morning. The girl is expected to be back in Halle tomorrow." Saxony-Anhalt State Prosecutor Juergen Hossfeld said investigators had concluded the girl made up the story about the attack that had shocked a nation struggling to come to terms with a rise in right-wing violence.

AIDS has hit 3 million people

GENEVA (R) — An estimated three million people worldwide have developed full-scale AIDS since the disease was first identified in the late 1970s, the United Nations World Health Organisation (WHO) said Saturday. But in a twice-yearly report, it estimated around 14 million adults and one million children have developed the HIV infection — which the WHO and many leading medical authorities say causes AIDS. The estimates — far higher than formally reported figures — represent an increase of half a million in AIDS cases since the last report in July and of one million in the incidence of adult HIV infections.

Kohl party picks top judge as presidency candidate

WINDHAGEN, Germany (R) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) nominated Germany's top judge, Roman Herzog, Saturday as its candidate to succeed President Richard von Weizsaecker.

The CDU selection committee's vote marked the end of Mr. Kohl's quest to find another eastern German for the job.

His original choice, Steffen Heitmann, the justice minister of Saxony state, proved an acute political embarrassment to Mr. Kohl, pulling out of the race after coming under fire over his arch-conservative views.

The decision means Mr. Herzog will almost certainly be the chief rival of Social Democratic candidate Johannes Rau, premier of North-Rhine Westphalia State, when the presidential election is held in May — a milestone in the run-up to October's general election.

The popular Weizsaecker must step down after completing a maximum of two five-year terms in the symbolic post.

Mr. Herzog, 59-year-old president of the Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe and a CDU member, was nominated at a CDU leadership committee meeting in Windhagen near Bonn which he attended.

Mr. Kohl told reporters 34 committee members voted for Mr. Herzog, with one abstention and one vote against.

Mr. Herzog was "the right person at a difficult time of transition for our fatherland," Mr. Kohl said, praising his directness and sense of humour.

Mr. Herzog, a stocky, white-haired native of the southern state of Bavaria and a specialist on international law, has not yet formally accepted the nomination.

He said he wanted to await the final decision of the CDU's Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), which has already nominated him informally.

Mrs. Clinton embroiled in Whitewater storm

WASHINGTON (R) — Hillary Rodham Clinton, who has turned the usually ceremonial role of first lady into a policy-making job, finds herself entangled along with the president in an investigation of her private business and professional life.

Reflecting the kind of generational change that the election of President Bill Clinton ushered in, Mrs. Clinton is the first presidential mate who came to the White House from an established career of her own.

Until just before his inauguration, she was a partner in the Rose Law Firm of Little Rock, Arkansas, and a member of various corporate boards.

"This whole thing could be more of a problem for her than for him," said an aide to a senior Senate Republican.

He referred to Mrs. Clinton's role in an Arkansas land development venture and a savings-and-loan failure, two business projects at the heart of matters about to be investigated by an independent counsel.

Since coming to Washington one year ago, Hillary Clinton has shattered the traditional ribbon-snipping and hostess role of presidential spouse by leading and shaping the administration's health reform programme.

When Attorney General Janet Reno names a special counsel to investigate the Whitewater affair, Mrs. Clinton will become the first presidential spouse to come under the scrutiny of such an investigation.

Even the Republicans who have been demanding the investigation shy away from suggesting she or her husband

N. Korea's nuclear programme is near complete but frozen, report says

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea was on the verge of developing a nuclear weapon when it froze its development programme because of mounting foreign pressure and spiralling costs, the national Yonhap News Agency Saturday quoted a Russian report as saying.

"According to our assessment (the programme) was near success," the agency quoted a senior Russian intelligence officer, Lieutenant General Gennady Evstafiev, as telling the Friday edition of the weekly Moscow News.

The Agency did not give a date for the reported halt, but

quoted Gen. Evstafiev, director of the Mass-Destruction Weapons Control Bureau in Moscow's Office of External Intelligence, as saying Pyongyang had already succeeded in developing a delivery system by modifying Scud missiles into the Rodong 1.

Moscow agreed with international experts on the gravity of the North Korean nuclear problem, Gen. Evstafiev reportedly added, saying that with Pyongyang in the midst of a transfer of power the political situation was very sensitive.

Fears of the North's nuclear intentions were heightened last March when Pyongyang threatened to pull out of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) and broke off talks with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Meanwhile North Korea, which shuns South Korean President Kim Young-Sam as a traitor and dictator, said Saturday it would welcome a visit to Pyongyang by an opposition leader from Seoul.

Yang Hyeon-Sop, chairman of North Korea's parliament, the Supreme People's Assembly, said in a statement that he would welcome a visit by Lee Ki-Taek, chairman of South Korea's main opposition Democratic Party.

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Zhirinovsky wants to head Duma's Foreign Affairs Committee — report

MOSCOW (AFP) — Far-right leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky is among four candidates from his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) vying to chair four committees in the state Duma, the Interfax News Agency reported Saturday.

Mr. Zhirinovsky, who campaigned for election to parliament last month on a platform calling for the return of the Russian empire, is seeking to head the Foreign Affairs Committee of the lower house of parliament, according to Inter-

fax, which quoted the Duma's temporary administrative office.

The other LDP candidates are Viktor Usinov, 56, running for the Defence Committee Leadership, Mikhail Lemyshev, 66, for the Health and Ecology Committee and Alexander Vengerovski, 40, for the National and Regional Policy Committee, Interfax said.

The LDP, which holds the second largest number of seats in the new parliament after the

pro-reform Russia's Choice, has also presented vice-presidential candidates for 12 parliamentary committees, the agency said.

Mr. Zhirinovsky had pulled out of the election for State Duma speaker Friday — which was won by Ivan Ribkin, 47, a pro-Communist opponent of President Boris Yeltsin from the Agrarian Party — saying he was "getting ready for the presidential elections" scheduled for January 1996.

Harding accused of part in Kerrigan attack

PORTLAND, Oregon (AFP) — The bodyguard of figure skater Tonya Harding has accused her of planning the attack on her rival Nancy Kerrigan, a television report said, after he and two other men were charged in the assault.

Bodyguard Shawn Eric Eckhardt, in a statement to NBC news Friday, accused Harding with the "Planning and cover-up" of the Jan. 6 attack on Olympic figure skater Kerrigan after a practice session at the U.S. figure skating championships in Detroit, Michigan.

The assault left Kerrigan with an injured knee though she said Friday she expected to back on the ice "in the next few days."

Citing sources close to the official inquiry into the attack, NBC said that no arrest warrant had been served on Harding, but that she was the subject of an "active criminal investigation."

Earlier Oregon prosecutor John Bradley had declined to confirm reports that Harding was under criminal investigation.

Meanwhile, the Washington Post reported Saturday that the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) is to ask Harding to

withdraw from the Winter Olympic Games, which get under way Feb. 12 in Lillehammer, Norway, because her presence there would create a "logistical nightmare."

USOC's Executive Director Harvey Schiller had denied such reports late Friday.

Harding won the women's title in Detroit in Kerrigan's absence, and the two had been chosen for the U.S. Olympic team.

USOC officials earlier said Harding's place on the team was safe so long as she was not implicated in the attack.

Kerrigan has refused to comment on her teammate's possible involvement.

Eckhardt, together with alleged assailant Shane Stant and Stant's uncle Derrick Brian Smith, were in custody Friday charged with conspiring in December to harm Kerrigan.

Authorities said the investigation into the alleged plot was continuing.

Eckhardt's lawyer Mark McKnight said his client had admitted involvement in the attack in which a man, allegedly Stant, hit Kerrigan on the right leg with a metal bar.

But McKnight added after Eckhardt's arraignment that his



Nancy Kerrigan client was "not smart enough" to have masterminded the assault.

been involved in the attack.

Eckhardt and Smith were arrested Thursday and Stant surrendered to authorities in Phoenix, Arizona Friday.

Indictments against the trio charged that they conspired in December in Portland, Oregon, to "unlawfully and intentionally cause physical injury to Nancy Kerrigan by means of a dangerous weapon, by means of striking Nancy Kerrigan in the leg with the dangerous weapon."

If convicted, they could face up to 10 years in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

Lillehammer is confident on security

OSLO (R) — Organisers of the Lillehammer Olympics said Friday they believed security for athletes was tight enough after a review spurred by the attack last week on American figure skating star Nancy Kerrigan.

"This case will not lead to any tighter security measures, but it underlines that the strict precautions we have planned will be needed," said Odd Ustad, a spokesman for the organising committee.

In London, International Skating Union (ISU) Vice-President Lawrence Demmy said he expected security measures for next week's European Championships in Copenhagen and in the world championships in Japan in March to be tightened as a result of the attack on Kerrigan.

"There will definitely be increased security to Copenhagen and Makuhari," Demmy said. "At the Olympics, security is always very tight anyway."

Kerrigan, the bronze medalist at the 1992 Olympic Games in Albertville and among the favourites for gold this year, was attacked during the U.S. championships in Detroit by a man who struck her right knee with a metal police baton.

Ustad said: "We have of course registered the incident and gone through our plans."

He reckoned it would be impossible for an outsider to get into the "kiss-and-cry" zone where skaters enter and leave the ice at the figure skating hall in Hamar, south of Lillehammer.

At other Olympic venues, he said there were also tight restrictions on access to athletes, both by the public and by the media.

"We've often been criticised for being too tight restrictions," he said.

Yet security at cross-country races, for instance, is far less strict — spectators in forests will be barely cordoned off from racers.

"Figure skaters are perhaps most at risk due to their high public profile," said Marit Rasmussen, an official at the Hamar hall. An Olympic gold can earn the winner millions of dollars in advertising and appearance money.

Security planning for the Lillehammer games took account of the stabbing of tennis star Monica Seles by a spectator last April at a tournament in Hamburg.

In another incident in Stuttgart Wednesday, a woman spectator stabbed a German first division soccer player, Oliver Moeller of Hamburg, with a kitchen knife as he watched an indoor tournament.

A 2,770-strong security force, including every third police officer in the country, will be working during the games at Lillehammer in the biggest security operation ever in Norway.

History's most lethal attack on athletes was the killing of 11 Israelis by Arab guerrillas at the 1972 Munich Olympics. By a bizarre coincidence, an Israeli hit-squad shot dead a Moroccan waiter in Lillehammer in 1973 after mistaking him for one of the guerrillas.

China coach 'fired star' for team's good

BEIJING (R) — China's iron-fisted track supercoach, Ma Junren, said in an interview published Saturday he had to drop a world champion from his star-studded squad for the good of his whole team.

But other sport officials said Ma's decision to dismiss 20-year-old Liu Dong in a fight over the 1,500 metre world champion's love life and other disciplinary infractions did not have the support of China's athletic community.

"I expelled Liu Dong," Ma bluntly told the official China Youth daily.

Ma's words were seemingly contradicted by his boss, Sun Yusen, the head of the Liaoning Province track and field team, who told the Beijing Evening News Saturday that Liu had returned to the team but was not being allowed to practice.

Instead, she was being asked to write a self-criticism.

"The position of the team leaders is clear," Sun told the newspaper. "If Liu Dong is only able to recognise deeply the errors she has committed and resolves to right her wrongs, she will still be an important member of the 'Ma family army'."

The deputy secretary general of China Athletics Association, Shang Niutang, told the newspaper: "No one from the association has ever spoken in favour of Ma Junren expelling Liu Dong."

When the reporter from the China Youth daily asked Ma why he was being so hard on a world champion, the mercurial trainer said he had to do it for the sake of discipline.

"She is not the only world champion on my team. If they all were like her, how could I possibly manage them in the future?"

"The Ma family army's team spirit and discipline cannot be destroyed by one person."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH
© Toronto Maple Leafs, Inc.

SENDING A LAD TO DO A MAN'S JOB

Both vulnerable. South dealer.

NORTH
♠ 5 6
♥ A K 10 8 4
♦ 4
♣ A Q J 10 3

EAST
♠ 2
♥ 7
♦ 7
♣ 8 7 6 2

SOUTH
♠ A K 10 7 6 4
♥ 3
♦ A J 5
♣ 3

The bidding:
South West North East
1♠ Pass 2♣ Pass
2♥ Pass 3♠ Pass
3♥ Pass 4♠ Pass
6♥ Pass Pass

Opening lead: Three of ♣
Ladies and gentlemen of the jury:

"South stands before you accused of one of the most egregious of bridge crimes—child abuse. The prosecution will prove the charge to be true beyond a shadow of doubt."

"North-South bid well to get to the spade slam. Once North revealed a willingness to play in spades, South's hand became enormous. The seventh spade and the ace of diamonds opposite a probable singleton considerably enhanced his playing potential, so any bid that failed to get to slam would have been an act of cowardice. South chose the direct route."

"West led a heart, won in dummy. The ace of diamonds was cashed and a club ruff provided the entry to hand for a ruff of the remaining diamond."

"Declarer now tried to return to hand by ruffing a club low. West overruffed with the eight. A heart was returned for East to ruff and another club completed the ruff by promoting West's queen of trumps for a second undertrick."

"It is our contention that declarer violated the child labor laws by sending a low trump to do the work for the second club ruff. Declarer should have ruffed with the king. The use of a trump followed by the ten would have limited the defenders to one trump trick as long as the suit broke no worse than 3-1."

"Your honor, my client, South, wishes to amend his plea to guilty and throws himself upon the mercy of the Court."

Sudanese fans stone referee after soccer defeat

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudanese soccer fans stoned the referee and members of a visiting Tanzanian team after it knocked the home side out of this year's East and Central African Cup Championship.

Police said the referee from Zanzibar and several members of the Tanzanian team, Simba, had been taken to hospital for treatment.

Simba defeated Sudan's most popular team Al Merreikh 2-1 Friday night in a had-tempered game at the Sudanese club's stadium in Omdurman, Khartoum's twin city.

Al Merreikh fans invaded the pitch and hurled stones at the Simba players and the referee.

Police restored order and Interior Minister Brigadier Abdulrahim Muhammad Hossein turned out in person to ensure the safety of the injured.

Simba, which went through to semifinal from its group with Express of Uganda, has threatened to withdraw from the competition because of the injuries sustained by its players.

ARABIC FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

The Language Centre at the University of Jordan announces that the intensive course in modern standard Arabic for speakers of other languages will commence on Jan. 29, and will last for 16 weeks.

The programme is intensive and classes meet in the morning for 20 hours per week, Saturday - Wednesday.

Those interested please call at the language centre for registration during the week prior to the beginning of the course.

Sampras retains NSW Open title; Fernandez, Date to clash in final

SYDNEY (R) — Pete Sampras rebuffed a fiercely determined Ivann Lendl to retain his New South Wales (NSW) Open title with a 7-6 6-4 victory in a rain-affected final Saturday.

The American world number one picked up a winners' cheque for \$42,000 as reward for the 21st singles title of his career, keeping his concentration after a heavy shower had interrupted the match at a crucial stage in the first set.

The unseeded Lendl, convinced he is fit enough to win more titles at the advanced age of 33, was not helped when the weather intervened just before the crucial first set tie-break.

He returned to save a third set point, but put a backhand into the net on the fourth to give Sampras the tie-break 7-5 and effectively seal the result.

"It was pretty close, but in the end he was only one who made a break point. I didn't make any," said Lendl.

"I didn't serve as well after the break as I did before, but otherwise I thought both of us played pretty well."

After the match Sampras warned his Australian Open rivals that he fears no-one as he heads towards Melbourne for the first Grand Slam tournament of the year.

The 22-year-old Sampras also revealed his desire to be regarded as one of the best players of all time.

"No, I'm not frightened of anyone. I feel that I play my tennis. I can win," said Sampras simply. "I think I'm the favourite and I'm going to Melbourne with confidence."

Asked to respond to suggestions from his coach Tim Gullikson that he could become one of the greatest players the game has ever seen, he replied: "I've thought about it, particularly winning on clay at Roland Garros. Winning on every surface, that would prove to me I'm one of the greatest of all time."

"I'm only 22. As I mature I think I'll get better and better. Hopefully this'll be another good year for me, like 1993 was."

Lendl, who has taken an interest in Sampras' progress from an early age, hailed Sampras as "one hell of an athlete" and poured scorn on those who think his now fellow-American is short on personality.

"From what I read in the papers, a personality in tennis is someone who sears, shouts, yells and throws tantrums," he said.

"It's sickening that someone who's down to earth, polite, behaves well, is reasonably clever and wears nice clothes has to apologise for the way he is."

Before linking up with Gullikson, Sampras once accepted Lendl's invitation to come and stay at his Connecticut mansion for a few days.

The master informed the pupil he possessed all the shots but needed to be more disciplined in his use of them. He had few problems getting the message across. "When I looked round the house and saw everything Lendl has got, I recalled Sampras," thought to myself. "If I knuckled down, I can have the same."

Lendl has also spent time in recent days giving an insight into the pressurised world inhabited by those who reach the coveted number one spot. Having spent a record 270 weeks at the top himself, his advice is to ignore people's expectations.

"What the public expects is that you win every match, but that's not possible," said Lendl. "I don't think anyone is remembered by how long they've been number one... It's by how many grand slam titles you win."

Lendl received \$24,150 as runner-up, almost \$3,000 less than the losing women's finalist will receive Sunday.

That final will be between American Mary Joe Fernandez and Japan's Kimiko Date, who beat Gabriela Sabatini and Patty Fendick respectively in Saturday's semifinals.

Sabatini's hopes of a first tour title in 20 months as she eased into the women's singles final.

Fernandez, seeded third, beat the second-seeded Argentinian 7-5 6-1, a less stressful victory than in last year's French Open, when she recovered from a set and 5-1 down against Sabatini to win the third-longest women's match in the open era.

The Match, played from four hours and then interrupted twice by rain, lasted only 90 minutes and earned Fernandez a final appearance against Date who Fendick 6-2 5-7 6-1 in the other semifinal.

Fernandez, absent from the tour in the latter stages of 1993 after abdominal surgery and still feeling her way back to form, was understandably delighted with the result.

"It was very satisfying performance," said the American world number seven, who spent the pre-match rain break playing dominoes. "I'm getting back their slowly, but I've still a way to go."

Sabatini, 3-0 down almost immediately, saved two set points at 5-3 in the first set and began to approach the net with some success.

But she folded completely after the second rain delay at 2-1 in the second set, losing the final five games without replay against an opponent who grew visibly in confidence.

Fernandez is seeded to meet world number one Steffi Graf in the quarter-finals at the Australian Open and may turn out to be one of the more serious obstacles to the German favourite.

EUROPEAN SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP Macedonia in but Yugoslavia must wait

ZURICH, Switzerland (R) — Macedonia was admitted to next week's draw for the 1996 European Soccer Championship Friday but the rump Republic of Yugoslavia was told it would have to wait.

A meeting of the European Football Union's (UEFA) emergency committee granted Macedonia provisional membership and said it would take part in next Saturday's draw in Manchester for the qualifying competition of the 1996 tournament in England.

But an application by Yugoslavia, banned from international competition since United States sanctions were imposed in 1992, was turned down for the time being.

UEFA President Lennart Johansson said the world body FIFA had told Yugoslavia it

could not enter the draw for the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta.

"We must do the same," he said, adding that UEFA would still leave the door open if the political situation changed before the qualifiers start in September.

"If the situation changes, then the next day we will meet and consider it," he said.

"Yugoslavia must feel we are trying to help them. We must give them hope that there is a chance."

"But we don't know what will happen."

Macedonia's entry brings the number of teams in the 1996 European championship to a record 48. With England automatically qualifying for the finals as hosts, the 47 others will play for the 15 places left.

Originally, UEFA had planned to have six groups of six teams with the top two qualifying and two groups of five from which the top team would go through and the two runners-up would play off for the final place.

Johansson told Reuters the organising committee would decide on a new formula to take into account Macedonia's entry.

He said he expected they would opt for seven groups of six nations and one of five. The runners-up with the worst record from the groups of six would then play off against the second-placed team to the group of five, he said.

A Yugoslav delegation including AC Milan's Montenegrin forward Dejan Savicevic pleaded with UEFA

for 25 minutes to be allowed in.

But Yugoslav federation President Milan Miljanic said afterwards he was not too disappointed with the result.

"I'm satisfied with that," he said. "I'm happy to know that we will be coming back into international soccer. But what happens next is out of our control."

Since the break-up of Yugoslavia into separate republics, the federation now represents only Serbia and Montenegro.

Croatia, Slovenia and now Macedonia have all joined UEFA as individual members.

Macedonia's entry will allow star striker Darko Pancev, now playing for German first division club Leipzig, to take part in the qualifying.

Seizinger posts 2nd skiing win in 2 days

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy (R) — German Katja Seizinger took advantage of a course tailor-made for her talents to win a women's World Cup super-giant slalom Saturday, her second win in two days in this Italian resort.

The 21-year-old super-G world champion skied the high-speed course in a time of one minute and one second 11.96 seconds to repeat her success in the downhill on the same Olympia Delle Tofane piste 24 hours earlier.

Austrian Ulrike Maier, winner of the corresponding race last year, was second in 1:12.55 with Canadian Olympic downhill champion Kerri Lee Gartner third in 1:12.58.

After the spills of last weekend's abandoned super-G in Altenmarkt, Austria, the course set here by Austrian Walter Hubmann was criticised as too easy by some competitors.

"There were only two real curves. It was too simple, just like a downhill with a few more gates," said Olympic super-G champion Deborah Compagnoni. The Italian finished outside the top 10 on a course of not suited to her style.

Swede Pernilla Wiberg, the overall World Cup leader, placed a provisional fifth and will extend her advantage over cup holder Anita Wachter of Austria, who finished a place lower, according to the results.

Wiberg now has 765 World Cup points while the Austrian Wachter is on 694, just behind Swiss veteran Vreni Schneider (698). Schneider has not skied on the past two days but returns to action in a giant slalom here Sunday.

Seizinger's 200-point haul in the past two days has boosted her to 523 points, fifth behind Compagnoni (530).

"I'm happy with the way I skied and above all that I managed to finish ahead of Wachter," said Wiberg, who is back to her best after a serious Achilles tendon injury ruled her out of the latter part of last season.

Seizinger built a lead of over a second on the upper part of the course and could afford a small mistake near the end.

"I got things wrong seven gates from the finish and I'm surprised it didn't cost me more," the 21-year-old said.

A downhill winner here last season, Seizinger naturally had no complaints about the piste.

"I love this course with its wide curves which suit me down to the ground. Naturally

I'm delighted that the Altenmarkt super-G is being re-run here," she added.

An extra super-G will be held here Monday to replace the controversial Altenmarkt race which the International Ski Federation (FIS) crashed from the record books Friday.

The race was abandoned because the conditions were adjudged dangerous after less than half the field had competed but the FIS initially said the results would stand.

The decision to scrap the results cost Seizinger 80 points and robbed Swiss Heidi Zurbriggen, sister of the great Swiss Pirmin Zurbriggen, of her first win after almost a decade on the World Cup circuit.

The unfortunate Zurbriggen finished a ninth in Saturday's race.

Italian Bibiana Perez, who suffered facial bruising in a fall in Friday's downhill, came back bravely to take fourth place in the super-G behind Lee-Gartner.

The Canadian, surprise winner of the Olympic downhill in Albertville two years ago, had her spirits lifted by her best result of the season.

"I aim to be at my best next month when I defend my

Olympic title in Lillehammer (Norway)," she said.

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<p>TODAY</p> <p>Cinema Tel.: 634144</p> <p>PHILADELPHIA</p> <p>DRAGON The Bruce Lee story Shows: 12.30, 3.30, 6.15, 8.30, 10.30 11 a.m. special show for children Thr.+Fri.+Sat. and Sun. Ninja Dragons</p>	<p>Cinema Tel.: 677420</p> <p>CONCORD</p> <p>CONCORD '1' Brigel Fonda —in ASSASSIN Shows: 12.30, 3.30, 6.15, 8.30, 10.30</p> <p>CONCORD '2' Beauty and the Beast Shows: 12.30, 3.15, 4.45, 6.00</p>	<p>Cinema Tel.: 699238</p> <p>PLAZA</p> <p>Amr Diyab, Omar Sharif and Yusra in Laughter, Play, Seriousness and Love (Arabic) Shows: 12.30, 3.15, 5.00, 6.30, 8.30, 10.30 p.m.</p>	<p>Tel.: 675571</p> <p>Nabil Al Mashhal Theatre</p> <p>presents a play entitled: Al Iim Nuron A popular political comedy Actors: Abder Issa, Daoud Jalal, Hassan Al Shaer, Fuad Shomali in addition to other comedians Every night at 8.15 Tickets are sold all day</p>	<p>Nabil & Hisham's Tel.: 625155</p> <p>AHLAN THEATRE</p> <p>Nabil and Hisham Theatre presents Ahlan Arab Summit Conference (play) daily at 8.30 p.m. Theatre is closed Mondays and Tuesdays</p>
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NEWS IN BRIEF

PLO to express concern over Israel-Vatican deal

TUNIS (RI) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) delegation left Tunis on Saturday for talks with Vatican officials in which they will express worries about the consequences of the Israel-Vatican deal last month for Jerusalem. The PLO delegation will discuss with the Vatican the negative consequences of the agreement on the status of Jerusalem. PLO spokesman Yasser Abed Rabbo said, Israel and the Vatican signed an agreement last month recognising each other and clearing the way for full diplomatic ties. Mohammad Zuhdi Nashashibi, a PLO Executive Committee member who heads the delegation, said he would remind the Vatican of a U.N. resolution declaring illegal Israel's annexation of the east of the city after the 1967 war. "We will discuss also the expansion of Jewish settlements in Arah (East) Jerusalem and the nature of the future relations between the PLO and the Vatican," he said before leaving Tunis.

Canadian official under fire in Lebanon

BEIRUT (AFP) — Palestinian hardliners on Saturday charged a visiting Canadian official, Marc Perron, with seeking the permanent settlement in Lebanon some 350,000 Palestinian refugees. Mr. Perron, who arrived Wednesday in Lebanon and began touring Palestinian refugee camps, heads the Middle East Department at the Canadian Foreign Affairs Ministry and is chairman of the refugees committee in line with the Middle East peace process. His visit "is in line with suspicious attempts to cancel U.N. Resolution 194 and to force our people into settling (in Lebanon) on the pretext of serving them," said a statement issued by four Palestinian organisations opposed to the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) deal on Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories. The Popular and Democratic fronts for the liberation of Palestine, the statement's main signatories, urged "the Arab states concerned with the Palestinian people's fate to provide them with sufficient aid... until they recover their legitimate rights." Mr. Perron voiced concern on his tour of the camps over "the lack of interest regarding the Palestinian diaspora" since the Israeli-PLO accord was signed in Washington on Sept. 13. He said a delegation of his committee on Palestinian refugees would visit Lebanon "to obtain aid for reconstruction, education and jobs" in the camps. "This visit will not harm the right of Palestinians to return," he added.

Iran studies pardon plea for German

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's Justice Department is reviewing an official request from Germany to pardon Helmut Szmikus, a German engineer sentenced to death here on charges of spying for Iraq. Tehran Radio reported Saturday. A spokesman for Chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi told the radio that the request had not yet been submitted to Iran's spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the only official qualified to pardon. Mr. Szmikus since the German's death sentence was upheld by the supreme court earlier this month. The pardon plea was being reviewed by experts, the spokesman said. In Bonn on Friday German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel made an urgent appeal to three Iranian lawmakers for Mr. Szmikus, 59, to be pardoned. Mr. Kinkel told Mohammad-Javad Larijani, a member of the national Security Council, that "Germany considered Mr. Szmikus case to be 'extremely serious.'" (see page 2)

Bus bombs kill three in Turkey

ISTANBUL (RI) — Three people were killed and 20 were injured in central Turkey when time-bombs hidden in luggage exploded on inter-city buses, police said Saturday. No group claimed responsibility for the Friday night blasts which damaged four buses, they added. Rebel Kurds have attacked buses in south east Turkey in the past but this was the first use of bombs. The semi-official Anatolian news agency said police were now searching all luggage on buses entering and leaving Istanbul. Security officials in southeast Turkey, meanwhile, said troops had killed seven Kurdish separatists in clashes.

Hekmatyar: Arabs will not be expelled

PESHAWAR (AFP) — Afghan Premier Gulbuddin Hekmatyar says he will never comply with requests to force Islamic fighters from Egypt or other countries to return home, according to a report here Saturday. "They are our brothers," he was quoted as saying by the Pakistani daily the Frontier Post. "They fought at our side against the Soviet army. It wasn't us who had them. It was Egypt and the other countries now opposed to their presence in Afghanistan who encouraged them to come here to fight communism" during the long Soviet occupation of the country. Egypt has asked the Afghan authorities to extradite several Islamic fundamentalists, among them Mohammad Mekawi, spokesman for a movement which has been implicated in the assassination attempt on Egyptian Premier Atef Sedki in November. Egyptian press reports have said Moustapha Hamza, another Islamic fundamentalist leader who was condemned to death in absentia in Egypt, is also in Afghanistan.

1 killed in Lebanese building collapse

TRIPOLI (AP) — A four-storey building which was badly damaged in the Lebanese civil war collapsed Saturday, killing a woman and injuring at least three people, a police source said. The structure, hit during fighting in this northern port city in the late stages of the 1975-91 war, had about a dozen dwellers, the source said. The woman, identified as 70-year-old Badriya Al Ali, was the only person inside when the building crumbled, according to police. Troops were dispatched to the site as rescuers worked to retrieve Ms. Ali's body from the rubble. The other victims were passersby. They suffered minor injuries and were treated in hospital. A civil defence official at the scene said the collapse was the result of damage caused by fighting on the demarcation line between the Oobta and Tabbaneh neighbourhoods.

Major: 'No real role' in Iraq arms rules

LONDON (RI) — Prime Minister John Major has told Britain's arms-for-Iraq inquiry that he had no significant role in setting or adjusting guidelines on sales of defence-related equipment to Baghdad. The Financial Times reported Saturday. In written evidence to the inquiry ahead of his appearance, before Lord Justice Scott on Monday, Mr. Major emphasised that during his time as finance minister and foreign minister he was not party to relaxation of rules, said the newspaper. Mr. Major set up the inquiry in 1992 to investigate whether British ministers knowingly broke guidelines governing arms sales to Iraq before the 1991 Gulf war. His aides maintain the prime minister has nothing to fear from the inquiry, which is trying to discover whether the Conservative government turned a blind eye as British firms helped build Iraq's war machine in the 1980s. Current Finance Minister Kenneth Clarke said on Thursday he would resign if the inquiry found he was at fault in signing key documents.

Pakistan is behind violence — India

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The arrest of 35 people for a series of bombings raids during the past two years has revealed their links with Pakistani military intelligence, India's security minister said Saturday. "It is clear that they have a nationwide network and are bent on creating trouble with support from Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI)," Internal Security Minister Rajesh Pilot said in the southern city of Hyderabad. Mr. Pilot's assertion came a day after the arrest following police raids in the cities of Bombay and Lucknow. Thirty-five people including a Bombay doctor, Mohammed Jalis Ansari, his brother and accomplices were charged with the bombings of trains, stations and public places which left 25 dead since 1992. Mr. Pilot said the suspects had links with the ISI and that Dawood Ibrahim was the key

Clinton hails Belarus, offers more aid

MINSK (Agencies) — U.S. President Bill Clinton on Saturday praised Belarus for becoming a nuclear-free state, and urged the young people of the former Soviet republic to help build a better Europe by pressing ahead with reform.

"What you do here might encourage other nations facing the same challenges," Mr. Clinton said.

"It can help build a broader Europe that is no longer divided but integrated, integrated by democratic governments, market economies and peaceful coexistence."

His speech at the academy of sciences came during a whirlwind visit after a two-day summit with Russian President Boris Yeltsin in Moscow that focused largely on post-cold war efforts to dismantle nuclear arsenals.

Mr. Clinton, accompanied by his wife Hillary and 13-year-old daughter Chelsea on his visit to Minsk, said Belarusians had more reason than most to want a better future because of the country's tragic past.

"This nation, which lost one in four of its citizens in the Second World War, must surely know better than any other on the face of the earth the terrible price Europeans have paid for their constant divisions," he said.

More recently, Belarus was devastated by the Chernobyl disaster. It was downwind of the 1986 accident at the Ukrainian nuclear power plant, and absorbed much of the fallout. While acknowledging that this undoubtedly contributed to Belarus's decision to dismantle and ship to Russia 72 SS-25 strategic nuclear missiles less than a year after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Mr. Clinton said the country could have kept the weapons and "rattled them around."

Instead, he said, it made a "braver and better choice to live nuclear-free," recognising that "real security lies in integrating with your neighbours." Mr. Clinton told Belarus Chairman Stanislav Shushkevich that an additional \$25 million in U.S. funds would go for the scrapping of the former Soviet state's 81 nuclear missiles.



U.S. President Bill Clinton salutes before boarding Air Force One with his wife Hillary on Saturday at Vankovo II airport in Moscow heading for Minsk, Belarus

The NATO plan is to close ranks with Eastern Europe, initially through joint military exercises.

Also on Mr. Clinton's brief Belarus schedule was a stop at the Kurapaty memorial, burial ground for tens of thousands of Byelorussians killed by Josef Stalin between 1937 and 1941. The only marking at the memorial was a ribbon-draped cross in a snowy, soggy marsh.

President Clinton also said Saturday his trip to Russia had strengthened ties with reformers there and stressed it was still important for the United States to remain engaged in Europe.

In his weekly radio speech, which was taped before he left the Kremlin on Saturday, Mr. Clinton said his meetings in Moscow "brought us to a new season of partnership, warm partnership with Russia's reformers."

The U.S. president told radio listeners back home it was important to stay engaged in Europe in the post-cold war era because American national security is ultimately still at stake.

"Many nations in the former Soviet bloc are fighting economic hardship that could threaten their democracies. In many of these countries, militant nationalists are fanning the flames of ancient, ethnic

and religious hatreds," he said. "And we still have to finish the work of reducing the cold war nuclear stockpiles. We can't afford to ignore these challenges."

Mr. Clinton headed for Switzerland later Saturday for the last stop on his six-nation European tour. On Sunday, Mr. Clinton will seek a breakthrough in stalled Middle East peace talks in a meeting with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad in Geneva.

Several dozen communist protesters demonstrated against Mr. Clinton's visit. They carried signs telling Mr. Clinton "don't interfere" and saying "the USSR exists and it will exist."

While Minsk has moved quickly on arms control, it has been slow to adopt political reforms. Popular elections have not been held nor has a new constitution been adopted.

Before departing Moscow Saturday morning, Mr. Clinton said farewell to Mr. Yeltsin in the Kremlin's St. George's Hall, the gleaming white and gold, cavernous room where they opened talks with a handshake on Thursday. He left Russia amid considerable pomp at the airport, with a military band playing the Russian and U.S. national anthems and "Stars and Stripes Forever."

The GPC deployed Friday several units on the old border, mainly the first armoured unit and the Amaliqa brigade, opposite the northern provinces of Al Bayda and Dhamar.

The YSP source said, "In a statement Thursday, the GPC slammed the mobilisation and reinforcement of troops by the YSP, saying it was against 'the spirit of national unity and risked a breakout of a civil war.'"

The GPC sources accused the socialists of lacking interest in implementation of a plan, approved by a military committee headed by the deputy chief of staff, Colonel Ali Mohammad Salah, to withdraw both parties' forces from the old border line.

Abdul Rashid Dostum, who started the current round of fighting by launching a power grab in Kabul on New Year's, said.

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Between 1,000 and 1,500 people waiting for the opening of the border had returned to the eastern Afghan town of Jalalabad, aid workers said.

Two million claims filed against Iraq

GENEVA (AP) — More than two million claims have been filed by people claiming they suffered losses because of Iraq's 1990-91 occupation of Kuwait, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said Friday.

"This is indeed an unprecedented undertaking," Dr. Ghali told members of the U.N. Compensation Commission, which plans to begin making payments to individuals in April.

He said the creation of the commission to adjudicate the claims from the Gulf war marked the first time the international community has tried to ensure victims of war that they would be paid compensation.

"The commission will be required to deal with a huge number of claims," Dr. Ghali said. "Until now 2,135,000 compensation claims have been submitted by 78 governments on behalf of their citizens, their corporations and themselves."

More than two million of the claims are from individuals, most of them from Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Jordan, Kuwait, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Yemen, he said.

Many of the people filing individual claims fled Kuwait on short notice because of the occupation, leaving behind possessions and better-paid jobs than they could find in their home countries.

The commission has said it is giving top priority to 1,100 claims for death and serious injury, including psychological harm. Top limits are \$2,500 for an individual and \$10,000 for a family. Corporate and government limits are much higher.

"Together we must work to ensure that sufficient funds are secured to allow the commission to honour these awards," Dr. Ghali said.

Carlos Alzamora, executive secretary of the commission, told the AP that the panel has \$5 million to \$6 million available from Iraqi assets that were frozen by other countries.

That will be enough for the first 3,500 claims of the 12,000 death and serious injury category from 19 countries, Mr. Alzamora said. "This is a very sensitive and symbolic category."

For other categories "we don't have the money," he said, adding he hoped Iraq would change its attitude and agree to pay provide more funds.

So far the Baghdad government has refused to set \$1.6 billion worth of oil as required by the U.N. Security Council to provide funds to the commission.

Corporations have a deadline of April 1 to file their claims and governments May 1.

COLUMN

Hillary vows them in Moscow

MOSCOW (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton charmed sick children, new mothers and elderly women in the streets as she dashed through Moscow in a snowstorm with her fellow first lady in row. She and Naina Yeltsin, wife of Russian President Boris Yeltsin, booted over a trio of sick pre-teens and sat through part of a childbirth class at Saviour's Hospital for Peace and Charity.

"I'm very pleased that Mrs. Yeltsin cares so much about children, and is doing so much to keep them healthy," Mrs. Clinton said. "I'm trying to do the same thing at home." The American first lady has been spearheading efforts to reform the health care system in the United States. Mrs. Clinton handed out 100-piece dinosaur puzzles to three children confined to bed with gastrointestinal ailments, and seemed delighted when Sergei Bychenko, a pale, stick-thin 11-year-old in yellow pajamas, responded with a "thank you" in English. "I like puzzles, but I'm not very good at them," she told the children. "I usually have to get my daughter to help me." Across the hall, pediatrician Olga Tryanina was preparing to demonstrate the physiology of childbirth for pregnant women and their husbands. "What have we here?" asked Mrs. Clinton, smiling but momentarily startled by the sight of the stuffed model of a pelvis in Tryanina's hands. She sat attentively, surrounded by pregnant women and their husbands, as the doctor pushed a rubber doll through the stuffed pelvis. "Here's the little one we've been waiting for so long!" she announced triumphantly as the doll's head emerged, followed quickly by a model of a placenta. "Excellent job," Mrs. Clinton said to Tryanina. "My husband and I also went to these classes years ago and learned many things."

The classes are part of an effort by Magee-Womens Hospital in Pittsburgh and Saviour's to create a modern family-centred maternity programme that can be duplicated throughout Russia. The country's infant mortality rate is 40 per 1,000 according to the Health Ministry statistics, more than four times that of the United States.

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Rebel forces fired shells and rockets into residential areas killing many people and causing extensive damage, it said.

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